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262

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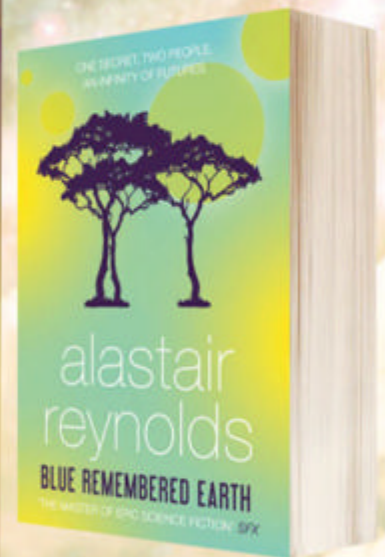
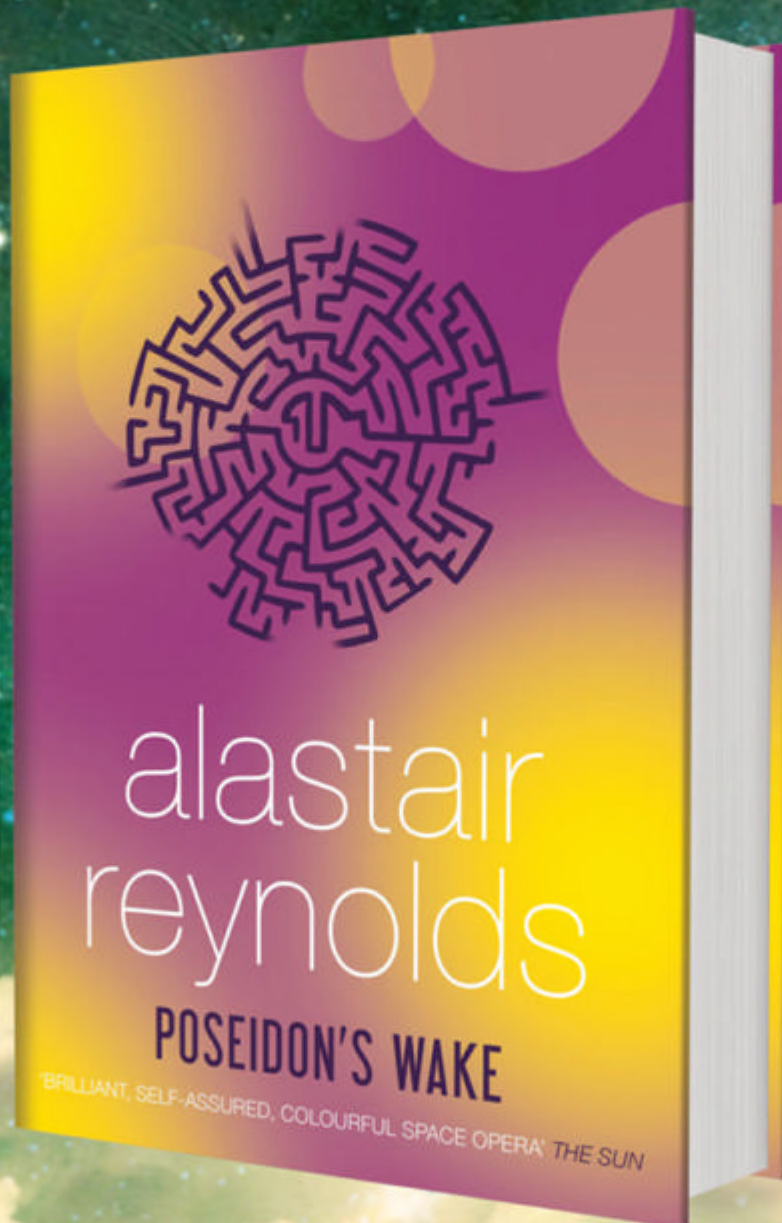
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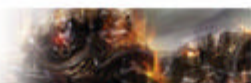
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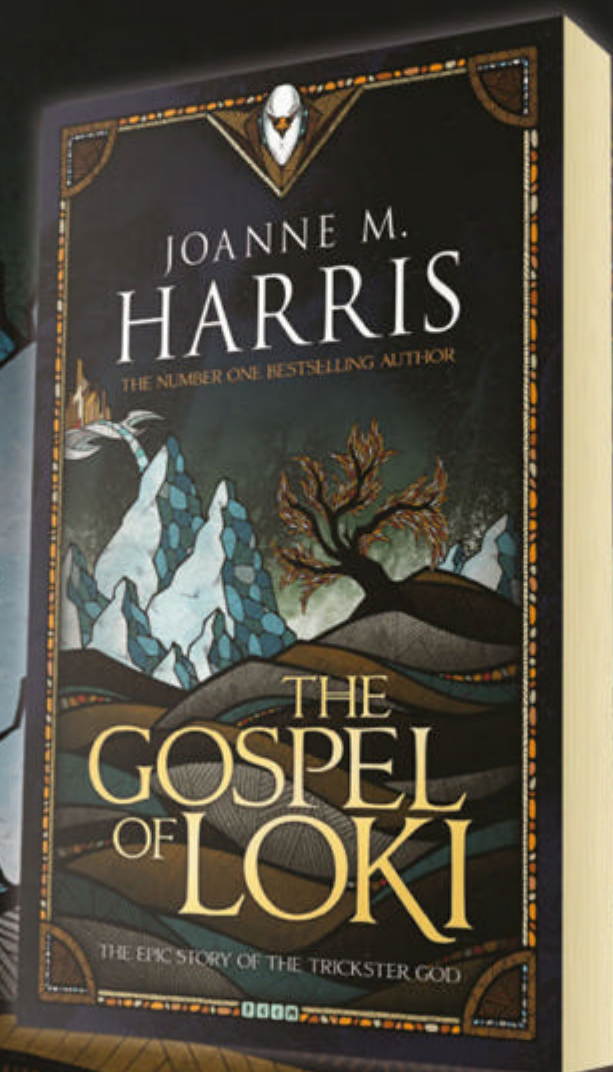
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THE INSIDE SKINNY

What your *SFX* chums are thinking about...

RICHARD EDWARDS EDITOR

RAVES

- "Chewie, we're home." Possibly the most moved I've ever been by a film trailer. Don't mind admitting I shed a tear.
- *Daredevil* was great, a believable crime drama that nonetheless felt part of the MCU. A bold experiment that paid off spectacularly.
- Thanks for all the lovely birthday messages for our 20th anniversary. We were really chuffed.



NICK SETCHFIELD FEATURES EDITOR

RAVES

- I've seen a sneaky 20 minutes of Guy Ritchie's *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* Okay, I'm an easy mark for '60s euro spy-fi capers but I really liked what I saw... Great soundtrack too.
- Good to hear *Agent Carter* is coming back. Maybe some of Marvel's glorious '40s era superheroes can pop up. Peggy teaming with Spitfire and Union Jack would rule the screen.



IAN BERRIMAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

RAVES

- Got a bit behind on *The Walking Dead*, but I finally caught up. Thought season five was great.
- Very pleased the *Adventures With The Wife In Space* blog is now tackling new *Who*: <http://wifeinspace.com>
- Shatner TV movie *Sole Survivor* is getting a DVD release - hurrah!



JORDAN FARLEY COMMUNITY EDITOR

RAVES

- The more I hear about *Rogue One* the more I like. Not every *Star Wars* movie needs Jedi.
- Sad to see *Constantine* cancelled, but *Daredevil* and *Agent Carter* returning for second seasons more than makes up for it.



RANTS
■ Man, Jared Leto's Joker looks rubbish.

ALEX COX OPERATIONS EDITOR

RAVES

- Actually almost nearly caught up with *Game Of Thrones*. My favourite real-life strongman has just arrived and is spilling entrails everywhere...
- ...which of course means my three-hours-a-night binge watching sessions will have to come to an end. Boo for traditional broadcast TV. May it receive a swift sword stab right through the back of its neck and out its mouth.



RUSSELL LEWIN PRODUCTION EDITOR

RAVES

- The Beeb shouldn't have announced that the Zygons were returning to *Doctor Who*: should have just sprung a complete surprise. Shapeshifters, after all.
- Wish they'd go back to making superhero/toy franchise films Us or PGs, and that goes for *Star Wars* too. Let the kids in, just like they used to when we were kids.



JONATHAN COATES ART EDITOR

RAVES

- So excited to see all of the physical effects being used in *The Force Awakens*. But it's frying my brain trying to figure out how BB-8 works. Is it magnets? Two robots, one mounted on top of the other? The Force? Whatever, I want one.
- The second *Fantastic Four* trailer looks so much better than that first dreary effort.
- Can't wait for *Ant-Man*!



DAVE BRADLEY GROUP ED-IN-CHIEF

RAVES

- Congrats to Emily St John Mandel for picking up this year's Arthur C Clarke Award for the fab *Station Eleven*.
- You should be watching *Person Of Interest*. His and hers bathroom towels featuring "I love you" and "I know" slogans. Just one of the many *Star Wars* bargains uncovered by our website's "Order 66... Things Online!" merchandise feature: <http://bit.ly/66things>



ADRIAN HILL AD MANAGER

RAVES

- The Empire is striking back! The second *Star Wars* trailer really did live up to the hype on 16 April, and I for one gave it a long and loud round of applause. Bad-ass adversaries, the return of the Millennium Falcon, and of course, the best was saved until the last second... "Chewie, we're home." Put a lump in my throat. Brilliant, just brilliant. Don't let me down, old buddy!



MEGAN DAVIS DEPUTY ART ED

RAVES

- Super excited for *Fantastic Four* to finally be released, I can't keep watching the trailer any more!
- Loving the look of the new costumes for the supervillain team in *Suicide Squad*.



NICKY GOTOBED DESIGNER

RAVES

- So, *The Force Awakens*, then. Yes, the trailer was great. Yes, Chewie has kept his youthful good looks. Yes, I'm excited!
- I'm watching the entire series of *Lost* again - second time round and I still love it.



JAMES WHITE WRITER

RAVES

- I'm still really enjoying what the team behind *The Flash* is doing with the character. It's light-hearted but quietly emotional at the same time.



RANTS
■ Even more than most trailers, I feel like I've seen everything from *Terminator Genisys* already, including spoilers I didn't want to. Where's the mystery, people?



It's become a cliché that 2015 is going to be the biggest year in the history of cinema. Ever! Now it's starting to live up to the hype. We've already piled in to see *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* and *Mad Max: Fury Road*, of course, but now we enter a period of wall-to-wall blockbusters as representatives of some of the biggest franchises ever to grace a movie screen - and some pretty big stars - come out to play.

Back in March I flew out to Los Angeles to meet our (human) cover star, Chris Pratt. Since *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, the former *Parks And Recreation* regular has become the hottest action hero on the planet. And while we still don't know if the rumours of him donning Indiana Jones' fedora are true, he does talk about hanging out with velociraptors on sure-to-be-spectacular dino sequel *Jurassic World* (p48).

We've also caught up with an icon from another generation, the one and only Arnold Schwarzenegger. Following his sojourn in politics, he's back as the Terminator for the first time since 2003 in the timeline-rewriting, dictionary-bothering *Genisys* (p66). He said he'd be back, and he's clearly not one to break his word.

But there's one movie that towers above all the rest this year, so we headed off to California to get the skinny on *The Force Awakens* and other happenings in the *Star Wars* galaxy (p60). With loads still to come in the next six months - and the small matter of *Suicide Squad* (p20) and *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* (p18) arriving in 2016 - turn to page 36 to subscribe to *SFX*, and make sure you don't miss a moment.

Rich

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@RichDEdwards

MAIN PHOTO BY OLLY CURTIS

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RED ALERT

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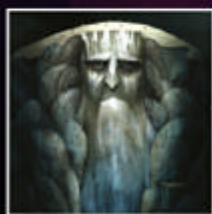
edited by Jordan Farley

DARK MATTER

Identity Theft

Stargate duo craft a science fiction mystery that won't soon be forgotten

EXCLUSIVE
ON SET
ACCESS



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**SIREN
CALL**

It's a family affair in mythological Irish animation *Song Of The Sea*.



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**END
GAME**

Producer talks fifth and final season of *Falling Skies*.



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**MAKES
SENSE**

First word on the Wachowskis' first TV show, *Sense8*.

YOU WAKE UP FROM suspended animation. No memory of who you are. No details about how or why you are on a derelict ship. That's the compelling concept driving Syfy's new space show, *Dark Matter*.

Based on the four-issue comic miniseries of the same name by *Stargate SG-1* writers/executive producers Joseph Mallozzi and Paul Mullie, the interstellar saga finds the memories of six crew members completely erased. The numerically-monikered amnesiac cast includes One/Jace Corso (Marc Bendavid), Two/Portia Lin (Melissa O'Neil), Three/Marcus Boone (Anthony

Lemke), Four/Ryo Tetsuda (Alex Mallari Jr), Five/Das (Jodelle Ferland) and Six/Griffin Jones (Roger Cross). Attempting to fill in the blanks, the group ride the ship to its preset destination. However, upon arriving at a mining colony, the crew make a startling discovery about themselves...

Through season one's 13 episodes, the team must struggle with the ramifications of this bombshell, decide whether their past dictates who they are in the present, and discover who is responsible for wiping their minds. Sci-fi maestros Mallozzi and Mullie will be serving as executive producers, along with Prodigy Pictures' Jay Firestone.



SCI-FACT!
Stargate Atlantis's David Hewlett will guest star as a sleazy agent in *Dark Matter*.



THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

Meet *Dark Matter*'s forgetful crew

FOLLOW THE LEADER

1 With several strong personalities on the ship, someone has to take charge. That duty falls on Two's shoulders. "The fact that she is such a quick learner and an incredible fighter allows her to assume that position without too much resistance," says star Melissa O'Neil. "If there is any resistance, she deals with it swiftly. Underneath all that, I like to think she has a good, strong moral compass. She's a rational, critical thinker. Two gets the job done and she likes to be efficient."

ROGUE WARRIOR

2 Every team has that loose cannon. In *Dark Matter*'s case, it's Three, who actor Anthony Lemke says is the swashbuckling Han Solo archetype. "My character is the one who embraces his past," explains Lemke. "He says, 'Alright. This is who we are. At least we're good at something. Let's be that and not be something we're not. Let's be mercenaries and feed ourselves by being the bad asses that we are.' He doesn't seek to change or rectify or seek redemption. That's not his path."

SPACE ADVENTURE

3 Marc Bendavid, who plays One, has never stepped on a spaceship before, let alone starred in a genre TV series, but he seems to be enjoying it. "I've run through exploding hallways," he says. "I floated up in zero gravity and got smashed down to the ground. I've gotten my butt severely kicked by my co-star on the first day of shooting. One of the earlier fight sequences that we did on a wire, I did myself... We did a scene in a wind tunnel blowing us down the hallway. It's all fun stuff."

HARD WIRED

4 R2-D2 and C-3PO step aside. Not every key character is human. The Android (Zoie Palmer), plays a crucial part in aiding the crew. "The droid is essentially our connection to the ship," says O'Neil. "She is the one who knows how to work this system because we don't have any of our memories. The droid has some secrets we're slowly figuring out, but she's a sophisticated and personality-punched character for us. We could not function without the droid."



"Well someone's got to wear the bright clothes."



"It was an idea for a television series that I had for the longest time," Mallozzi tells Red Alert. "I was on *Stargate* for many years. Every season, *Stargate* would get picked up, so I had more time to work on *Dark Matter* and develop it. As a creator, it's very hard to sell original ideas. However, people like established properties. Essentially, we had a detailed idea of what we wanted to do. We pitched the idea to Dark Horse Comics, they published the comic book and we wrote the script based on the comic book. Then we got together with Jay and he worked his magic."

On a crisp March morning in 2015, Red Alert visited the Toronto set of *Dark Matter*. Today, the cast and crew have gathered outside of One's quarters. A half-naked Bendavid stands with a towel wrapped around his waist, joking about shaving his belly hair and whether he should speak to the props department about borrowing some abs.

Once the cameras begin rolling, there's a knock at One's door, it slides open and Two enters the room. She's there to deliver a status report after the crew dealt with an android run amok earlier in the episode. After dancing around the sexual tension dripping between their words, Two goes to leave. Instead, she closes the door, locking them both inside.

"One of the interesting things is the dynamic of this crew, and their individual relationships, is always in a state of flux and always changing, either through their adventures or these big revelations," offers Firestone.

Heavily serialised TV series often get weighed down by their own dense mythologies, with more and more questions raised before previous ones get resolved. According to Mallozzi, that won't be the case with *Dark Matter*. "From the get-go, we didn't [want] to be one of those shows that piled on question after question and just lead the viewers along until they got tired," says Mallozzi. "We're approaching this first season as a book. It begins with them waking up from

"People stick with a show because they bond with the characters"

stasis and will end with a number of our questions answered.

"Over the course of the first season, we'll be peeling the onion back on various backstories," he continues. "We are going to be finding out who they are. It will be about how their backstories affects not only them, but their dynamic with the rest of their crewmates. There are also a couple of overriding mysteries, two big ones of which we'll be answering at the end of the first season."

Dark Matter promises the requisite amount of action, intrigue, romance and futuristic technology associated with most SF projects. However, Mallozzi and Firestone believe the series delivers other elements that will separate them from the competition.

"Our show deals with some very dark themes, but something we did in *Stargate* is there's always an underlying sense of humour throughout these characters," says Mallozzi. "It doesn't do anything to undermine the action or tension. It's just there and gives our characters a little colour. It goes a long way to humanise them and allow viewers to connect."

"The Syfy Channel said too many sci-fi shows concentrate on a brand new visual effect no one has seen before, or a new explosion and a brand new alien, and they forget about character," concludes Firestone. "People stick with a show because they bond with the characters. There are emotional things that people can relate to in this show and that doesn't exist if all you do is land on the planet and kill the bad guy. This is all about character." 

Dark Matter premieres 12 June on Syfy US, and on Syfy UK shortly after.

"I am not a number!"



Yeah, just head down that corridor, we're sure it's completely safe....





SONG OF THE SEA

Sea Change

Family adventure meets Irish folklore in Tomm Moore's animation

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC?

Did you ever? It's easy to forget that folklore and cultural mythology was once as widely accepted as modern science. That waning connection to the old ways inspired Cartoon Saloon, the studio behind *The Secret Of Kells*, to create *Song Of The Sea* – a traditionally animated kids' adventure steeped in half-forgotten Irish folklore.

"I was thinking about when we started to change in the country. When did those old beliefs start to disappear?" director Tomm Moore tells Red Alert. "And I was thinking about the fact that folklore was getting turned into something for tourists rather than something that was really believed and felt. I thought we were losing something more than stories if people were starting to disregard the environment because of it."

The film focuses primarily on the Celtic stories of the Selkie – mythological creatures that are humans by land, seals by sea. Six-year-old Saoirse is the last of her kind. With their father still in mourning, Saoirse and her older brother Ben are sent inland to live with their grandmother. But with Saoirse becoming increasingly sick, Ben must help his sister back to the sea to save not only herself, but the mystical creatures that inhabit the Irish countryside, among them stone giant Mac Lir and Macha, the Owl Witch.

"Everything in it is referenced from folklore, but everything is adapted to suit the story," Moore explains. "We wanted the core of the story to be about the family, particularly Ben, so a lot of characters from

folklore we're using as mirrors to what's going on in the main family story – the granny is echoed in the witch, the dad is echoed in the giant and so on."

This approach to folklore was inspired by the films of Studio Ghibli, "I always admired the way Hayao Miyazaki's films are very universal and you can enjoy them without knowing anything about Japanese culture," Moore says. "That made them really unique and special and added something to their mystery. I wanted to do something like that with Irish stories."

Song Of The Sea's story starts in 1987 for good reason – partly because, as a 10-year-old at that time, Moore remembered there still being a tangible belief in the old ways, and partly because the film takes some of its cues from Amblin's family-friendly '80s adventure movies. "That's what Will [Collins, writer] and I talked about a lot, *ET* and that feeling of those films that we watched growing up. There just isn't that same sense of classic fairytale any more, everything is very pop culture heavy now, which is great, but it's nice to try and make something a little more timeless."

"Everything in it is referenced from folklore but adapted to the story"



Don't go into the light!

Selkie Saoirse and her brother Ben are sent to live on land.



"My main concern with this film was to make sure it would work for children," Moore asserts. "I thought the uniqueness of the art style and the depth of the story would allow it to be enjoyed by adults as well but I really did want to make a film like *My Neighbour Totoro* that had a little bit more of a melancholy tinge to it. Kids' films are really important because it might be the first film someone sees, so there's a responsibility to make a film that really lasts." **SFX**

Song Of The Sea opens on Friday 10 July.



Mythical creatures or not, birthday cakes are universal.



Even Selkies join the onesie trend.

AERIAL ASSAULT SF TV ROUND UP



NEWBIES

It's pilot season and that can mean only one thing - loads of new shows to look forward to this autumn! The list of newly confirmed series include: *Arrow/Flash* spin-off DC's **LEGENDS OF TOMORROW**; **SUPERGIRL**, starring Melissa Benoist; film adaptation **MINORITY REPORT**; **LUCIFER**, a police procedural based on the character from Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* and starring *Miranda*'s Tom Ellis; **LIMITLESS**, a TV sequel to the Bradley Cooper film; comedy **ANGEL FROM HELL**; **FRANKENSTEIN CODE**, starring Rob Kazinsky as a modern-day Frank; an adaptation of classic videogame **MYST** on Hulu; a **ROBOCOP** webseries on Machinima which will be filmed from RoboCop's perspective; a new series featuring **THE MUPPETS**; fairytale show **EMERALD CITY**, which almost made it to series last year; **CORDON** from *The Vampire Diaries*' Julie Plec about a city put into quarantine after a deadly viral outbreak; and a two-hour **ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW** TV movie. Phew!

Continued on p19.

"I desperately wanted to do a Batman film - who doesn't? And I wanted to do *Wonder Woman*. I was a Marvel kid growing up, but I was always DC-curious."

DC would be wise to hire Joss Whedon sharpish.

SCI-FACT!

Bryan Fuller cut his teeth writing for *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager*.

DON'T QUOTE ME

© GETTY (1)

MY SCI-FI

Bryan Fuller

The veteran TV sci-fi scribe behind horror masterpiece *Hannibal*



FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY FILM

Probably *Alien*. That was the movie that made me want to be a filmmaker. Actually, I was well on my way to becoming a psychiatrist. I was taking an experimental psychology class, and my [proposed] experiment was "Do you get more out of a movie if you understand the psychological subtext to it or do you get more out of being a popcorn viewer?" I had a focus group seeing *Alien*, just as a popcorn experience. Then another group seeing it with detailed pictures of how the monster has a penis head and Mother betrays her children and there's fallopian tubes as spaceships and vagina walls as doors. My instructor was like, "What are you doing here? You need to go to film school."

FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY TV

Probably one of my all-time favourite TV shows was *The Munsters*. It was my introduction to the Universal Monsters. I saw it when I was like three or four years old, going, "Who are these people?" Then I saw what they were inspired by, and it changed the way I looked at movies.

FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY BOOK

Geek Love by Katherine Dunn. I would kill to make a movie of it. It's a fantastic story, which, at its heart, has a family of freaks who care very much about each other and also celebrate how different they are from one another.

FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY HERO

As a kid I loved *Wonder Woman* and I loved *Aquaman*. If I had an opportunity to write a DC movie, I would write either a *Wonder Woman* or an *Aquaman* movie. That would be a blast. Believe me, [Warner Brothers] knows that I want to do it!

Hannibal season three airs on Sky Living in the UK from Monday 8 June.



SCI-FACT!
Killjoys' Hannah John-Kamen appeared in best *Black Mirror* episode "Fifteen Million Merits".

They're like super-efficient bounty hunters, only better looking.



Videogame *Dark Souls*' Hannah John-Kamen stars as Lucy.

KILLJOYS

The Last Laugh

FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

The next generation of scruffy space pirates

ITS HEROES ARE ROGUES

1 Like Han Solo? How about Malcolm Reynolds? Then meet sarcastic John (Aaron Ashmore), his damaged ex-GI brother D'avin (Luke Macfarlane), and the beautiful but deadly Dutch (Hannah John-Kamen) — three fun-loving bounty hunters just trying to make a living in a galaxy teetering on the brink of war. "It's a show about a sort of family," says Macfarlane, "because we all do travel around together on this spaceship. And we have very different personalities, but we also interact like a family. John's my brother, we fight. Like every good family, it's totally dysfunctional. There's a comedy or a humanness to that part of the show. It's not all just us stabbing and killing and shooting people."

THEY'RE LICENSED TO KILL

2 "Unlike Earth bounty hunters," explains showrunner Michelle Lovretta, "Killjoys are part of a

governing body called the Rack. That's the people who will license them, make sure that they are following their warrants, and escalating them as they get higher. When you are a Level 2, there's certain warrants you can do. When you're a Level 3, you can do more. When you're 4 and 5 — so it goes up. 4 is 'live and dead', which means you bring someone in and ideally you bring them in alive, but if they happen to die en route... Meh. You have a licence, it's fine. So it allows us, every week, to have a different story and a different sort of warrant."

WORLD-BUILDING IS KING

3 "We've all seen a lot of shows where you get on a ship and every week is a new civilisation," says Lovretta. "We explore a more confined universe. We have a neighbourhood that our people patrol, which is a planet called Kresh and her three moons. So as we explore those areas, we meet new people. But it's all used to build a larger world that we get to go to and meet people again and

again. So we retain the novelty of where you go on a mission, but we have now added a different sense of world-building to it and a sense of community that, through these great characters, we get to explore."

IT'S NOT A WESTERN

4 Lovretta hastens to remark, "It would be incorrect for us to paint it as a space Western. It does have Western elements because [like] all things that have a sense of adventure and size and romp factor to them, you can correlate a little bit with that sort of world. But it has more of a science fiction bent to it. So it's more towards *Blade Runner* than it would be towards the Western... There's a lot of comment on class because often the thing that distinguishes one country or one planet from another is their level of wealth."

IT WON'T SUCK

5 "I promise zero succubi and zero vampires," laughs Lovretta, who also created *Lost Girl*. "It's all about space. Space is an adventure because it's limitless... We don't take the world too seriously, but we take the audience very seriously. And we want them to feel respected — their intelligence, their sense of fun, their understanding of tropes that exist in the genre. We have fun with them, and we make them our own." **SFX**

Killjoys airs from Friday 19 June on Syfy US. A UK airdate is TBC.

N A O M I N O V I K



Buy it at your local Waterstones or Waterstones.com





FALLING SKIES

SCI-FACT!
A *Godzilla* hotel recently
opened in Tokyo.

GODZILLA IN HELL

Catching Fire

IDW sends Gigantis to the Netherworld

● Usually confined to rampaging across Earth, the King of Monsters will soon be descending to the fiery depths of Hades itself. Devised by editor Bobby Curnow, *Godzilla In Hell* sees a revolving team of creators guiding Toho's famous daikaiju, starting with writer/artist James Stokoe, who makes his first return to the character since 2011's *Half-Century War*.

"I'd done a straight *Godzilla* story with that book, so getting a chance to work on something different and on a stranger slant was really exciting," says Stokoe.

Described as "new territory" for him, the Big Grey Gecko initially finds himself out of his natural element. "*Godzilla's* always going to be *Godzilla* no matter where he is," says Stokoe. "Things might get a little more bizarre... but I think his reactions will be recognisable for anyone who has seen a *Godzilla* movie."

Comparing it to "writing a Liam Neeson action movie with all the shreds of humanity sucked out of it," Stokoe insists he found no difficulty in penning a story with no recognisable human protagonists. "*Godzilla* doesn't need to steamroll from point A to point B because his daughter is taken," says Stokoe, who will be followed on the five-parter by fellow *Godzilla* veterans Dave Wachter and Bob Eggleton plus newcomers such as Brandon Seifert. "He does it because he's *Godzilla* and stuff explodes when it's in his way!" 

Godzilla In Hell #1 is published in July by IDW.



Just when you think things can't get any worse...

End Of Days

The post-apocalyptic sci-fi war series winds down with grit

AFTER FOUR YEARS OF fighting invading aliens the battle for planet Earth finally comes to a head in the fifth, and final, season of *Falling Skies*. The end of season four left beleaguered hero Tom Mason (Noah Wyle) in the far reaches of space, gazing at a weapon that will impact season five. While on Earth, Tom's sons are going on the offensive against newly power core-less Espheni.

Co-executive producer/director Olatunde Osunsanmi, who directs the two-part season opener and the all-important final episode of season five, tells Red Alert that the show will pick up pretty much where the season four finale left off. "The end of season four was a mind-bender and the beginning is a mind-bender too," he enthuses. "Our showrunner, David Eick, came up with a really cool way into season five."

"This season is about the final push and trying to complete the final push," Osunsanmi says. "They destroyed the power core at the end of season four but now they still have all the Skitters and the other different aliens on the planet. It's about attempting to finish the job. There's also all of this pent-up rage from the humans. They've taken our mothers, our fathers, our children and we've finally had enough."

And fans can expect to see that rage in all of its visceral glory. "This season is probably the most brutal and violent we've seen," Osunsanmi says with sincerity. "I've got standards and practices constantly telling us to stop and go back. But it's not just gratuitous. They are at war and we are seeing a series of final battles. The battles have been bigger than they've ever been. We're trying to push it from every angle: visually, stylistically and do all we can to max it out."

But the producer/director is quick to add that character moments won't be buried in the melee. "The show is really about family. It's about the Masons and the family that grew out of them in the 2nd Mass. And Tom goes further than he's ever gone into the rage and revenge in this season. He even pulls the 2nd Mass into it which makes this season fascinating. It's about how far Tom's willing to go to win this world. It's the story that surprised me the most. Also there are people who die along the way that we're not going to expect. I almost wish I wasn't behind the camera so I could enjoy the end just as a fan!" 

The final season of Falling Skies airs on Fox UK from 30 June 2015.

STAR TURN

Grant Bowler

The resident lawman of *Defiance* on the Syfy show's third season

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

▶ "This year, we meet a new alien race in *Defiance*. They are called the Omece and they are far more powerful than any other Votan species. They pre-date all of the other Votan races in the show. In fact, they were once the masters of every Votan race. When they get to Earth, they are extremely unpopular with everybody – except for the humans who have no idea who they are."

A FAMILY AFFAIR

▶ "I hated the relationship between [Grant's character] Nolan and Irisa [played by Stephanie Leonidas] in season two. I didn't like the conflict. In season one, Nolan was the parent and Irisa was the child. In season two, Irisa was a pissed-off adolescent. In season three, their relationship is much more two-sided. It's a beautifully drawn, mature relationship. It's gorgeous."

COLD CASE

▶ "We started to shoot season three of *Defiance* in the dead of winter. On a day-to-day physical level, it's been horrible! It was the coldest February on record in Toronto this year. It was regularly minus 30 with the wind chill. It's been freezing. One day, we were filming a big crane shot and the wind was blowing so hard that the snow was actually flying at us uphill. Uphill! You really want to give up all hope when it's snowing up at you like that."

SNOW JOKE

▶ "The winter setting has given us this very strong post-apocalyptic landscape for the show. We've played on it in the past, but we've had to rely on CGI to help us. The snow that's fallen from the sky has done far more than we could have ever done before. It's been fantastic."

BOOMTOWN RATS

▶ "In season one, *Defiance* was a thriving boomtown. The story started when the town was just on the cusp of all of this potential. In season three, *Defiance* is a very different place. The EMC has pulled out. It is a power vacuum. *Defiance* has moved on. I like the *Defiance* of season three. I think it's a really fertile ground for storytelling."

The third season of *Defiance* premieres on Syfy on Thursday 18 June at 9pm.



SCI-FACT!
The IMAX-only *BvS* trailer reveal featured Bats and Supes running towards each other at the end.

RELEASE DATE
25 MAR 2016

FREEZE FRAME

THIS MONTH:
The Dark Knight squares off against the last son of Krypton in **Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice**



- The Metropolis skyline looking less rubble-y than last time. They've even erected a Supes statue in the middle.



- There are echoes of Mexico's Day of the Dead celebrations in this image. The Man of Steel looks troubled by mass worship.



- Some classic Superman iconography here – holding a Russian missile, or rocket overhead. Is Kal-El working for Uncle Sam?



- These black ops soldiers with Superman insignia on their shoulders would suggest yes.



- Seems not everyone's convinced Superman is a saviour sent from the skies...



- ...especially Ben Affleck's Bruce Wayne, who looks like a man who can't remember if he turned the oven off.



- The *Dark Knight Returns*-inspired Batsuit boasts tiny ears and a subtle Bat logo on the chest.



- Bruce stands over the Batmobile in a dilapidated building. See the sneaky, Riddler-esque question mark on the left pillar?



- Batman emerges from smoldering wreckage – a bulkier Bats than we've seen before on screen.



- Another *Dark Knight Returns* nod – Batman wielding a rifle, which no doubt launches a grappling hook.



- The caped crusader dons some heavy duty armour for a soggy scrap with Supes.



- How do you fight a man that can fly? Find out next March.

THE BUZZ

NICK



Zack Snyder has a gift for a wow-worthy visual but there's something weirdly lumpy about this trailer. There are flickers of coolness but as a whole the dour tone is crushing.

JORDAN



The first half of this trailer is everything I feared *BvS* would be after the joyless *Man Of Steel*, but the second half looks promising – Frank Miller's grizzled arse-kicker brought vividly to life.

RUSSELL



Two minutes 13 seconds that sum up all that's wrong with modern superhero movies (especially DC ones). Will the final film really be as glum, portentous and colourless as this?

JAYNE



Affleck could make a decent Batman; he's suitably grumpy here. Love the Alex Ross-esque shots of Supes dangling in the sky. But I don't trust Snyder after *Man Of Steel*, and I don't trust this film...

IAN



Somehow this trailer sells me on the idea of Affleck as the Dark Knight – suddenly his face just seems to fit. But mostly it just gives me the fear that this film is going to be insufferably pompous.



THE LAST SHIP

"I'm sorry, are you supposed to be here?"

Ground Zero

The Last Ship has a new mission for its second year

WHILE SEASON ONE OF *THE LAST SHIP* – the Michael Bay-produced post-apocalyptic series about a crew of navy officers fighting to save humanity – saw the crew find a means of stopping the virus that's ravaged their world, season two now presents an even bigger challenge for the group.

"Season one was about finding the cure," says co-creator Steven Kane. "Season two is about getting the cure out there and seeing what's left of America and how we can fix it. How we can get, on a practical level, the vaccine manufactured and distributed and communication systems up and running so people can know that the cure's out there. And also, what are we facing when we get to America? The real America, outside of this crazy world we're in now. What else is out there? Is the rest of America like Baltimore, or is the rest of America completely fine? They don't know. So it's a discovery."

Kane explains that in exploring the effects of the apocalypse, the show harkens "back to a different time in our history, when the country was fractured. That was the Civil War. Because the ship heads south, and they go online a lot more. So they discover a country that's really in flux, lawlessness. There's no federal government. People are trying to survive the best they can. There are new enemies out there, foreign and domestic."

"Some of the challenges our characters are faced with," adds executive producer Jack Bender, "are people who may be naturally immune. If you are naturally immune, you may not want everybody being cured for the greater good, because you are in a very powerful position. So bringing the cure to everybody is the great equaliser, and our characters may face some real obstacles along those lines."

The Last Ship returns to TNT on 21 June, and Sky 1 later this year.



AERIAL ASSAULT SF TV ROUND UP



NEWBIES

- ▶ Steven Spielberg developing Aldous Huxley's SF classic **BRAVE NEW WORLD** as a miniseries for Syfy.
- ▶ Rumoured **AGENTS OF SHIELD** spin-off starring Lance Hunter and Mockingjay won't happen.
- ▶ John Ridley working on a new mystery series for Marvel and ABC.
- ▶ Greg Berlanti developing **INFINITE HORIZON** based on the Gerry Duggan comic, a futuristic retelling of Homer's *The Odyssey*.
- ▶ By Grabthar's hammer! Paramount to bring back **GALAXY QUEST** as a TV show.
- ▶ Director David Robert Mitchell creating **MR POSTMAN**, about a mailman who investigates dark mysteries.
- ▶ Katee Sackhoff returning to sci-fi TV with futuristic series **RAIN**.
- ▶ **THE X-FILES** reboot enlists original series writers James Wong and Glen Morgan, but *Breaking Bad* creator Vince Gilligan is out.
- ▶ In other **X-FILES** news the miniseries will air from 24 January 2016 on Fox US. Expect a UK airdate shortly after.

© GETTY (1)

DON'T QUOTE ME

"I think I over-pitched the comedy. If I had my time again I'd do the comedy very differently. I think where I did possibly succeed was in the tortured stuff; surprise, surprise!"

Seems Christopher Eccleston is his own harshest critic when it comes to his Doctor.

SCI-FACT!

Guided missile destroyer the USS Dewey stands in for the USS Nathan James on *The Last Ship*.

NEW AUTHOR

Al Robertson

The Brighton-based writer is a striking new voice for Cyberpunk

Robertson finished his first draft of the novel in 2010.



WHAT WOULD YOU WRITE AS *CRASHING HEAVEN'S* COVER BLURB?

▶ Accountant of the future Jack Forster and his sidekick Hugo Fist, a military AI that manifests as a virtual ventriloquist's dummy, are being persecuted by the Pantheon, a group of sentient corporations that are worshipped as gods. They've got to work out why and do something about it.

HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT BUILDING THE WORLD OF *CRASHING HEAVEN*?

▶ A lot of *Crashing Heaven* comes from looking around at the world we live in now. Jack Forster's a heavily abused corporate drone – most of us have either been one or know one. And modern technology is a lot like a ventriloquist's dummy. Neither can exist without us, but both very easily take on disturbing lives of their own if we let them. There's a lot of film noir in there, too – *The Third Man's* moody, broken atmosphere was particularly important.

WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT YOUR HERO, JACK FORSTER?

▶ On one level, he's not at all unique – he's an everyman who's been shafted by the corporate world. He could be any one of us. On the other hand, he's got a ferociously powerful, gleefully psychotic military AI that thinks it's a ventriloquist's dummy living in his head and counting down the days until it takes over his body. So, probably that!

WHICH SF/FANTASY AUTHORS WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE COMPARED TO IN A DREAM REVIEW?

▶ There are so many! JG Ballard for his cold, incisive realism, Leigh Brackett for her visionary world building, William Gibson for his understanding of how media shapes reality.

Crashing Heaven is published on Thursday 18 June by Gollancz.



SCI-FACT!
The *Suicide Squad* debuted
in *The Brave And The Bold*
#25 (1959).

SPOTLIGHT

**SPOILER
WARNING!**

Antiheroes and a controversial clown
assemble in DC's star-studded *Suicide Squad*

You wouldn't want to
run into them at your
local youth group.



THE MONSTER SQUAD

► Murderers. Psychos. Cannibals. Meet mankind's new saviours – two handfuls of DC Comics' biggest asshats assembled into one mean team and packed off on top secret, utterly deniable, totally dangerous jobs in the hope of getting their sentence cut (and a nasty explosive implant removed). “*Suicide Squad* is a *Dirty Dozen* with supervillains,” says David Ayer, the gritty *Fury* writer-director charged with lassoing these reprobates for celluloid.

ROGUE LEADER

► The Squad's always had a fairly fluid line-up – depending on who was occupying Belle Reve Penitentiary at the time – but as ever, the nasty piece of federal government handing out the missions and day release forms is Amanda Waller, played by Viola Davis. Her man on the inside is Squad mainstay Rick Flagg Jr (Joel Kinnaman stepping in

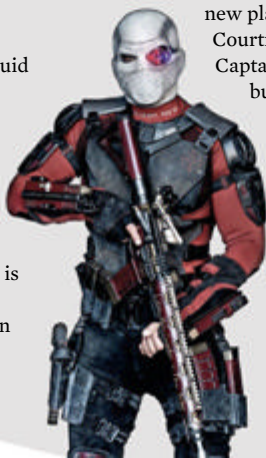
for a schedule-buggered Tom Hardy), the beleaguered military man whose increasingly tenuous grip on his mental health makes him ideal for leading Task Force X.

TARGET MAN

► With Tom Hardy out the movie, the celebrity spotlight will naturally fall on the assassin Deadshot, played by Will Smith. A perennial Batman nemesis, the cold-eyed-if-conflicted marksman should expect to rub against his new play pal Captain Boomerang (Jai Courtney), not just because of the Captain's less-than-competent approach but also because Boomerang's dad was most likely killed... by Deadshot. Awkward.

RIDING HARLEY

► Deadshot's best bud is also unpleasant and correct. Margot Robbie's Harley Quinn is in the process of breaking her beloved Joker (Jared Leto) out of Belle



Where will Jared Leto's
version rank among the
onscreen Joker greats?

Reve when she bumps
into Deadshot heading to the same
destination for a more professional reason.
The two are quickly found more permanent
digs there by Waller...

BLACK MAGIC WOMAN

► So what's the mission? The first job on Dr Waller's tick list is rumoured to be hijacking a biological weapon en route to one Lex Luthor. This turns out to be the Enchantress (Cara Delevigne), whose powers have an allure for one determined to bring gods down to Earth. The Enchantress and her split personalities are also co-opted into the dysfunctional deviants, which by now includes – complete with *SFX*'s own unreliable odds of them being “suicides” by the end credits – Killer Croc (Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje, 5/1), Slipknot (Adam Beach, evens), Katana (Karen Fukuhara, 3/1) and El Diablo (Jay Hernandez, 4/1).

WHY SO SERIOUS?

► But whither Mr J? Despite that internet-dividing debut image, the tattooed titan of terror isn't actually going to be in the movie much, though his bony shadow will hang over it from his jail cell – but expect him to be bidding adieu to Belle Reve by the end of the movie, setting in motion the events of the solo Batman outing in 2019.

GRAVE ROBIN

► Talking of Batfleck, the chiseled chin-master's cameo will most likely be a two-way street – a flashback sequence to weave into both *Suicide Squad* and *Batman V Superman*, which scuttlebutt suggests could be the Joker's murder of Robin, the brutal events that have retired the Caped Crusader and even estranged Harley Quinn from Her Puddin'. So should we expect some Jason Todd/Red Hood action at some point?

WHEN TO EXPECT IT?

► *Suicide Squad* opens on
5 Aug 2016. **SFX**

BBC

DOCTOR WHO

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A heartwarming tale of volcanic love and Hawaiian singing.

LAVA

All You Need Is Lava

Pixar goes Hawaiian in its latest animated short



Lava director James Ford Murphy.

NEVER LET IT BE SAID that Pixar does things the easy way. Take the studio's latest short, *Lava* (in cinemas this summer in front of *Inside Out*). In most animations, characters express themselves through movement. But in this musical tale of a lonely volcano looking for love in what will eventually become today's Hawaiian Islands, the massive Uku – and Lele, his heart's desire – had to remain still.

"As an animator I love challenges," director James Ford Murphy tells Red Alert, "and I love the challenge that these characters can't move. What are you gonna do to make them entertaining and likeable so an audience can identify with them? It frustrated us incredibly, but it forced us to come up with solutions we wouldn't have if we just animated it the way that we always animated something."

Murphy's *Lava* was inspired by the Disney musical shorts of the '40s and '50s – films like *Susie The Little Blue Coupe* and *Willie The Operatic Whale* that told their stories through song – as well as Murphy's own love of music, particularly the melodies of the South Seas.

"Visually I was going for the feeling of an old '40s or '50s cartoon, almost like a lost *Fantasia* [segment]. At the end of the day we really wanted to create characters that were also believable as places. That was the balance I was trying to walk – have a sweet story told by song that harkens back to those old cartoons, but do what we can do in this medium to bring a singing mountain to life in a way that you believe."

Murphy wound up basing *Lava* on over a million years of geological history. "If you know the history and the geology of the Hawaiian islands, it's fascinating how they just go over this hot spot and then they just kind of melt back into the sea and another one pops up... That just seemed like a love story to me – 'Does this one know? Do they have any idea? So it's kind of taking poetic licence with geology.'"

The filmmaker – a veteran of movies such as *Toy Story 2* and *The Incredibles* – says he spent a year making *Lava*, after an initial eight months of listening to every piece of Hawaiian music he could find. His research paid off in the Polynesian-style song he wrote for the

film, sung by its anthropomorphised lovers. While Pixar chief John Lasseter greenlit the film in part for the sense of scale it required.

"One of the things that John got really excited about was scale. He's like, 'We're just not really good at establishing a true sense of scale.' What we learned as we got into it was scale is defined by the speed of the vehicle with the camera on it. I imagined this would be shot by helicopters. But if you go any faster than a real helicopter, all of a sudden your model shrinks."

"That," laughs Murphy, "was our big revelation." **SFX**

Lava can be seen before all screenings of *Inside Out*, released 24 July. Check back next month for an in-depth look at *Inside Out*.

"At the end of the day we really wanted to create characters that were also believable as places"

STATION ELEVEN

Eleventh Heaven

Emily St John Mandel wins
2015 Clarke Award



● There is nothing more quintessentially 2015 than the way in which Emily St John Mandel found out she'd won the premier prize for genre fiction, the Arthur C Clarke Award.

"I was obsessively hitting refresh on Twitter," says Mandel. "My experience has been that I find out about everything on Twitter first! It was very strange - I'm used to obsessively hitting refresh and *not* winning the awards, but it was a really lovely surprise."

It's a fittingly modern method to receive the news considering the subject matter of *Station Eleven*, a novel that tracks a theatre troupe as it brings Shakespeare to a post-apocalyptic landscape.

"I wanted to write about the modern world, about this extraordinary apparatus of cell phones and aeroplanes, electricity and running water that I think we completely take for granted," says Mandel. "It seemed to me that an interesting way to write about this present-day world would be to write about its absence, to think about what the world would look like if all of those details were to fall away."

It's an idea that, combined with Mandel's elegantly sculpted prose, has propelled her into the bestseller lists and seen her join an impressive list of previous Clarke Award winners. "I grew up in Canada, where Margaret Atwood is sort of our reigning queen from a literary perspective, so it's incredible to win an award that she won," says Mandel. "I have vast respect for a lot of the other winners - China Miéville is one of my favourite writers. It's an extraordinary honour."

The question now, of course, is how to follow such a resounding success - although it seems we'll be waiting a while to find out. "In theory I'm working on another novel," says Mandel. "But in practice *Station Eleven* has taken over my life. Which is a great problem to have!"

Station Eleven is published by Picador and out now.

AERIAL ASSAULT SF TV ROUND UP



SHOWRUNNING

▶ **AGENT CARTER**, **AGENTS OF SHIELD**, **PERSON OF INTEREST**, **ORPHAN BLACK**, **GALAVANT**, **IZOMBIE**, **POWERS**, **THE LAST MAN ON EARTH** and **DAREDEVIL** all receive new season orders. Phew!

▶ **RED DWARF** commissioned for two more series by Dave. The channel that is, not former SFX editor Dave Bradley.

▶ **CONSTANTINE** cancelled by NBC, but hope remains it could be revived by The CW.

▶ Peter Harness writing a two-part Zygon story for **DOCTOR WHO** series nine.

▶ ABC cancels **RESURRECTION** and **FOREVER**. With names like that how could they resist the irony?

▶ **THE MESSENGERS** also given the chop by The CW after just one season.

▶ **HELIX** cancelled by Syfy after two seasons.

▶ Cancelled Eric Kripke/JJ Abrams series **REVOLUTION** getting a final season in comic book form. The original writing staff is on board for the digital comic releasing across May and June.

DON'T QUOTE ME

"If Darth Maul was coming back, he should be topless, tattooed, bigger horns, robotic legs! I would love to do it!"

A Darth Maul *Star Wars* Anthology film? Ray Park is game.

SCI-FACT!
Film and TV rights to *Station Eleven* have already been snapped up by producer Scott Steindorff.

RED ALERT

Expect more knowing, loving, humour from the franchise.



LEGO JURASSIC WORLD

Brick Flick

Classic dino films get the blockbuster treatment

FROM *STAR WARS* TO *BATMAN*, TT'S Lego games have tackled almost every major sci-fi and fantasy property going with a wink and a smile. In fact, the only surprise in their next game covering all four *Jurassic Park* films is that it took them this long.

"I think it's something everyone's been speaking about for quite a while now," says Tim Wileman, Assistant Producer. "It was a no-brainer for us, and with the fourth film coming out it's given us the opportunity to reignite the whole thing and relive all the original action as well. We couldn't make a *Jurassic World* game without covering the other films. So it's very exciting."

The game will feature 20 levels of gentle platforming, puzzle-solving and trinket collecting set on two huge hub islands - Isla Nublar and

Isla Sorna - with each level focusing on a famous scene from the films. The game lifts dialogue straight from the big screen with 100 playable characters (including Mr DNA!) and 20 different kinds of controllable dinosaur.

Despite being created for kids first and foremost, TT Games hasn't shied away from the scary side of the films. "We wanted to provide the most authentic *Lego Jurassic World* experience we possibly could," says Wileman. "We don't shy away from that tension and we're not afraid to recreate the original atmosphere from the films. But by that same token we're making kids' games, which I think gets forgotten from time to time and we need to be mindful about balancing the tension with our own brand of humour, which is obviously very important to us."

Lego Jurassic World is released in June.



THE KIDS AREN'T ALRIGHT

1 After a relatively slow start, Netflix is now brimming with original SF shows. The latest, six-episode Canadian series *Between*, started airing weekly from 21 May and is about a town afflicted by a mysterious disease that has killed everyone over the age of 21 – which explains why everyone appears to be taking a kip in this pic. We'd put good money on it going full *Lord Of The Flies* by episode two.



IMAGE BANK

Treat your peepers to these tasty visual morsels



NIGHT WATCH

2 Filming on *X-Men: Apocalypse* kicked off in Montreal recently, and with it came our first glimpse at the film's youthful Nightcrawler, played by *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes*' Kodi Smit-McPhee. The blue-skinned, BAMF-ing Bavarian teleported away with the best scene in *X-Men 2* (the incredible opening White House attack), so Kurt's return in *Apocalypse* is most welcome indeed.



LINK TO THE PAST

3 Partial to some solitaire or several heated rounds of competitive poker? Never settle for a boring, bog-standard deck again thanks to these gorgeous *Legend Of Zelda* playing cards, created by independent artist Soren Kalla. Each of the 12 royal cards and two Joker cards features an iconic Zelda character (and Tingle, arf) while the standard suits have been replaced by Triforces, arrows, rupees and heart pieces. They're available to buy in Hero Green or Hylian Blue now from www.sorenkalla.com/shop.

AFTERLIFE #104

Nichelle Nichols

Uhura in *Star Trek*



PLAYING THE ENTERPRISE'S chief communications officer Nyota Uhura on TV between 1966–1969, and then again on the big screen from 1979–1991, Nichelle Nichols helped transform racial stereotypes. From that first on-screen interracial kiss with Captain Kirk to, er, attempting to seduce Scotty and dancing the Seven Veils in Shatner's ill-judged directorial stint *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier*, Nichols has always boldly gone where no woman has gone before... A talented singer and dancer as well as an actress, Nichelle also worked with NASA in the '70s and '80s to help encourage women and minority applicants to its astronaut programme.

We spoke to the legendary 82-year-old actress at Gold Coast Supanova. She was more than happy to be probed for Afterlife...

WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY THE ROLE AGAIN?

► Yes I would love to play her again. I would love to if Gene were here and wrote the script. But I think the right writer who appreciated Gene would certainly be able to do it too and do it in his name.

WHAT WOULD UHURA BE DOING NOW?

► Pursuing what she wanted to be doing to begin with – to be an actor and I think she would succeed. If I can do it she can do it!

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU THINK WAS UNFINISHED ABOUT UHURA'S STORY?

► Yes. Gene had all kinds of plans and scenarios for the character. We used to sit with him and he used to ask how we felt about this and that and we were able to tell him how we felt.

DID YOU GET ANY SOUVENIRS FROM THE SET?

► Yes and I'm not going to tell you what or where they are because they're mine! I have costumes in my house and they're in my closet even today. Any show that I've ever done they've given me my wardrobe. I also have jewellery and I have scripts.

IS THERE ANYTHING FROM THE SHOW YOU WISH WAS REAL?

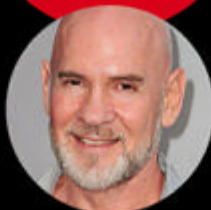
► What do you mean – it was real! And whatever wasn't real became real in the end or will become real in the future.

WHAT WOULD IT SAY ON UHURA'S GRAVESTONE?

► She'll never leave us. She'll never get away. Never get away...

AERIAL ASSAULT

SF TV ROUND UP



CASTING CALL

► Mitch Pileggi (above) is onboard as Mulder and Scully's old boss Walter Skinner in January's **THE X-FILES** revival.

► Rosario Dawson will be back as Claire Temple for **DAREDEVIL** season two. The character could also pop up in other Marvel/Netflix TV shows.

► Expect to see a lot less flippin' on **ARROW**, Colton Haynes is no longer a regular on the show.

► **Happyland's** Katherine McNamara to play lead character Clary Fray in **SHADOWHUNTERS**. Alberto Rosende and Emeraude Toubia have also joined the cast. Meanwhile McG has signed on to direct the pilot episode.

► **SPOILER ALERT:** Osgood will be back for series nine of **DOCTOR WHO**.

► **PREACHER** adds Jamie Anne Allman and Derek Wilson as Betsy and Donny Scencin.

► Toru Uchikado joins NBC's resurrection of **HEROES REBORN**.

► Evan Peters returning for **AMERICAN HORROR STORY: HOTEL**.

► **Justified's** David Meunier has joined the cast of **DAMIEN**.

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DON'T QUOTE ME

"He's the Gandalf of *Doctor Who*! He seems to have that mythical thing about him."

Peter Capaldi needs to grow a beard, and quick, if he's going to live up to Jenna Coleman's description of the Twelfth Doctor.

SCI-FACT!

Robert A Heinlein dedicated his 1982 novel *Friday* to Nichelle Nichols.

RED ALERT



Extant's back, but will it hold our interest this time?

EXTANT

Extinction Event

The Spielberg-produced sci-fi series is back...

WHILE **EXTANT**'S FIRST SEASON dealt with the sudden pregnancy of astronaut Molly Woods (Halle Berry) after more than a year alone in space, it ended on something of a cliffhanger, with Molly's alien child on the lam.

"In the second season," says executive producer Mickey Fisher, "we're gonna find out that there are consequences that lead to a deeper mystery. We've got a lot of new cast, new worlds, new things that we're exploring, and a big blockbuster movie told over 13 hours."

The show's two principal additions for this season are names very familiar to genre fans: *Watchmen* and *Supernatural* star Jeffrey Dean Morgan and *The Walking Dead*'s David Morrissey.

Morgan plays JD Richter, "who is our cop of the future," explains Fisher's fellow exec Greg Walker. "In the first episode of the season, he gets a call to respond to a murder investigation. He shows up and runs immediately into Molly. They end up together across a large portion of the season. He's strong, tough, sexy, the classic rogue – there's definitely some sparks."

"The other character we're introducing is the head of the Global Security Commission – a little like Homeland Security, the NSA – General Tobias Shepherd,

played by David Morrissey. He has known Molly for years, and he's always had a bit of a thing for her. So she's caught between these two guys in a triangle.

"Beyond that we'll be introducing some new aliens and some new robots. *Battlestar Galactica* is really a touchstone for us as far as what ethics are involved when you're talking about synthetic life that is almost identical to us in every way, and what's different in how we all treat each other. That goes all the way back to Asimov."

Extant season two airs on CBS from Wednesday 1 July and Amazon Prime shortly after.



"Hey, hanging in a graveyard always cheers me up."

SENSE 8

Sensory Overload

The Wachowskis go global on the small screen

ACROSS THE PLANET, eight complete strangers share the same terrifying vision of the violent death of an unknown woman. In the aftermath, they begin to experience strange sensory phenomena: seeing, hearing and feeling sensations that are not their own. As the eight slowly become aware of each other, they realise that they are not alone – and that they are being hunted.

Sense8 is the new 12-episode Netflix series from the combined minds of creators Andy and Lana Wachowski and J Michael Straczynski, bringing the Wachowskis' talents to television for the first time. "About eight years ago Lana walked in, threw a piece of

"We want to shoot every single thing that happens in Mumbai *in* Mumbai"

paper on the desk and said, 'So what do you know about doing TV?' totally out of the blue," says executive producer Grant Hill, whose projects with the Wachowskis include the second and third *Matrix* movies and *Cloud Atlas*.

"What I soon found out is that the Wachowski version of television is a whole different thing," Hill says. "You have a lot longer to tell a story which is the reason we wanted to go in this direction, because we thought we had a really strong story that needed that time. But we also had a story that has eight central characters and they live in eight very disparate cities ranging from Nairobi to Seoul to Mumbai and London, Berlin, Mexico City, and Chicago and San Francisco – so you think, 'All right, that's a broad scope but people have done it before.' But then they were like, 'We really feel that since the characters are so strong and it's so important that their home environment is so strong, we want to shoot every single thing that happens in Mumbai *in* Mumbai. And we

want to do it more or less in script order.' So your normal idea, 'Oh I know a bit about television,' goes out the window and you start reinventing the wheel."

That wheel rolled across the globe, with a core team travelling to each city and a cast that includes Korean star Doona Bae, Bollywood's Tena Desae and Germany's Max Riemelt, alongside some familiar SF faces including Naveen Andrews, Freema Agyeman and Daryl Hannah. "We travelled fairly light," says Hill. "We thought, if we're going to be in these countries and we're making this sort of commitment to film all of the material scripted in the country in that country, then the other thing we have to do is start drawing more upon the local resources. So when we're in India we want predominantly an Indian crew and yes, we'll have three or four people who are in charge of overseeing the continuity and the look of the thing, but that helped us a lot."

The Wachowskis directed seven episodes in the series, with *Cloud Atlas* co-director Tom Tykwer and *V For Vendetta*'s James



Russian roulette
looks even less fun
when playing alone.



How come the latex gloves seem
more creepy than the loaded gun?

McTeigue taking two apiece and visual effects supervisor Dan Glass handling one instalment. "They're obviously old friends to all of us and they'd been aware of the series and shown some interest," says Hill. "Nearly everybody there knew each other and had worked together, a lot of them most recently on *Cloud Atlas* which is probably the best training we could have done for this. You do *Cloud Atlas* and think, 'God, don't ever do that again please'. Then they come up with the next hardest thing. In both cases, it is remarkable what you can do if everybody is walking in the same direction." **SFX**

All 12 episodes of *Sense8* arrive on Netflix from Friday 5 June.

NEWS WARP

ALL FACT, NO FILLER



▶ RIP **STAR TREK**'s Yeoman Janice Rand, Grace Lee Whitney (above), who died at 85 and **EXCALIBUR**'s King Arthur, Nigel Terry.

▶ Alan Dean Foster writing **STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS** novelisation.

▶ **AVATAR** exhibition going on tour across unconfirmed cities in 2016, and an **AVATAR** themed Cirque du Soleil show will tour America later this year.

▶ Nintendo partnering with Universal Studios to create rides based on their characters.

▶ *Lego Dimensions* game to feature a **LEGO DOCTOR WHO** expansion set, complete with Peter Capaldi and TARDIS mini-figs.

▶ Frank Miller wrapping up his *Dark Knight* comic trilogy with **THE DARK KNIGHT III: THE MASTER RACE**.

▶ Xenomorphs crossing over with *Vampirella* in new comic book.

▶ Telltale Games teaming up with Marvel for a narrative-driven adventure game. It's not yet known who will star.

▶ Ben Aaronovitch's **RIVERS OF LONDON** series of fantasy crime novels heading to a comic shop near you.

"I am completely unevolved when it comes down to civil boundaries. You know what, you're weirding me out. You are a bottom feeding muckraker."

Robert Downey Jr had some strong words for Channel 4's Krishnan Guru-Murthy after that interview walkout.

SCI-FACT!
Straczynski and the Wachowskis have mapped out five seasons' worth of stories for *Sense8*.

RED ALERT

We're not convinced
the black outfit
wasn't more stylish.



DAREDEVIL

Who Dares Wins

Hero of Hell's Kitchen talks season two

● With Netflix swiftly renewing *Daredevil* after the runaway success of the first series, Charlie Cox will soon don the red leather again. Doug Petrie (*Buffy The Vampire Slayer*) and Marco Ramirez (*Sons Of Anarchy*) are taking over from the departing Steven DeKnight as showrunners, and Cox is hoping that next year's second season will delve even deeper into Matt Murdock's colourful mythos, starting with Hornhead's most famous old flame.

"Matt makes a reference in the first season to 'that Greek girl that I dated in college,' so it'll be fun if Elektra makes it in," he teases. "Obviously, Bullseye is one of the great *Daredevil* villains, so at some point I hope to see him as well. Frank Castle - aka The Punisher - would also be great, and maybe more of Wilson Fisk."

According to Cox, the new series could reveal further details about Karen Page's troubled background. "I'd love to see a bit of her backstory," he says. "There's hints of it in the first season, that she has a dubious past, and a lot of the fans will know what that relates to, so maybe we might get the chance to see that. In the first season, we saw where Foggy and Matt's chemistry comes from, so it'll be interesting to see where Karen has come from, and also to explore where that relationship with Matt Murdock goes."

While there's speculation that *Daredevil* and his fellow Defenders Jessica Jones, Luke Cage and Iron Fist might show up in *Avengers: Infinity War*, Cox is especially keen to explore The Man Without Fear's long-standing friendship with Spider-Man himself. "Peter Parker was Matt's best friend for a period of time," he says. "And what about Black Widow as his ex-girlfriend? That would be a very interesting dynamic, and I would hope to see some of that drama unfold." **SFX**

Daredevil season two will screen on Netflix in 2016.



NICK SETCHFIELD'S DEVELOPMENT HELL

Your monthly glimpse into Hollywood's hoped-for future

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE! CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR

► **Scarlett Johansson**'s read the *Civil War* script. And she's impressed. "You know, the film has a very different feeling than anything of Marvel's that I've read or been a part of before," she tells *Collider*. "I think these films are kind of maturing with the audience, so there's even more complex psychological twists that I hadn't necessarily anticipated." These mind-melting twists will be brought to you in the glory of IMAX 2D – in fact it'll be the first film to be shot with IMAX's new 2D digital

cameras. Expect a movie stacked deep with Marvel franchise faces: Black Panther, Ant-Man, Hawkeye, Scarlet Witch, the Winter Soldier, the Falcon, the Vision and War Machine are all onboard, alongside *The Incredible Hulk*'s **William Hurt**, returning as General "Thunderbolt" Ross. Inglourious Basterd **Daniel Brühl** plays classic Cap nemesis Baron Zemo. Oh, and there's *Sherlock*'s **Martin Freeman**, too. And just one wafer thin mint?

WHAT'S HAPPENING, FLASH? FLASH GORDON

► Just a man. With a man's courage. And *Layer Cake*, *Kick-Ass* and

Kingsman: The Secret Service on his resume. Yes, none other than **Matthew Vaughn** is tipped to direct the *Flash Gordon* remake, returning Alex Raymond's interplanetary champion to the big screen for the first time since 1980's joyous Mongo-fest (and no, Sam J Jones's rocket cycle-riding cameo in *Ted* doesn't count). Vaughn's reportedly in negotiations with Twentieth Century Fox to helm this new blockbuster take, set to be produced by *Chronicle*'s **John Davis** and penned by *The Bourne Ultimatum*'s **George Nolfi**. No word on whether the movie will retain the '30s setting of the

original comic strip adventures or deliver a wholly modernised Flash but one thing you should know: this morning's unprecedented solar eclipse is no cause for alarm...

TO THE KITCHEN BLENDERS! GREMLINS

► Top tip: if you feed **Chris Columbus** after midnight he'll give you the inside word on the *Gremlins* reboot. "I am involved," he confirms to *Slashfilm*. Columbus wrote 1984's original but bailed on 1990's *Gremlins 2: The New Batch*. Now he's returning to the Gizmoverse as producer. "We were approached with an idea

BLADE RYANNER!

BLADE RUNNER 2

► **Harrison Ford** has a co-star in the belated *Blade Runner* sequel. And no, it's not Sean Young. Sorry, Sean. *Drive* and *Gangster Squad* star **Ryan Gosling** is tipped to join Ford on the acid rain-drenched streets of future LA. No word on who he's playing – and we're still waiting to hear the results of his Voight-Kampff test – but *Prisoners* director **Denis Villeneuve** is itching to step into Ridley Scott's shoes: "People were asking me, what do you want to do?" he tells *The National Post*. "I'm dreaming to do science fiction since a very long time. So now that the door is open, I'm jumping into it. My soul will be filled if I do that... I'm ready to do it because the original *Blade Runner* is by far one of my favourite movies of all time. *Blade Runner* is almost a religion to me." Well, that's encouraging.

that really sounded like an interesting version," he says. "It's not a remake of the movie at all. It's just a reinvention of it." Columbus aims to tap into the kind of generational nostalgia that recently saw the world weep tears of simple joy for a Wookiee and his pal. "When I saw the *Star Wars* trailer and saw Chewie and Han Solo at the end, it was emotional. And that's what everybody wanted for the past 30 years. We had wanted that. So, for me, I would want to get involved if we could create some sort of emotional connection, even though it's a new story."

AUSTIN POWER!

THE SIX BILLION DOLLAR MAN

► The Bionic reboot has a new writer (we're not entirely sure what happened to the last one but we suspect it may have involved a slo-motion scrap with a cybernetic Bigfoot). Argentina's **Damián Szifron** is the man set to return reconstituted flyboy Steve Austin to the screen in an inflation-adjusted take on the classic '70s TV show. He's a left-field choice with impressive form: Szifron directed 2014's *Wild Tales*, nominated for an Oscar for Best Foreign Language film. "The themes surrounding this beloved property allow for the creation of a memorable sci-fi actioner as well as a bold spy thriller," says Szifron, as Dr Rudy Wells installs a screenwriting chip directly behind his cornea. "I'll do my best to deliver the strongest basis for an amazing cinematic experience."

CAUGHT IN THE WEB!

SPIDER-MAN

► We know the Webslinger is officially swinging his way into the Marvel movie universe. The big question remains, though: whose mug will be behind the mask?

Current frontrunner for the most coveted gig in young Hollywood is *Ender's Game* star **Asa Butterfield**. At just 18 he's close to Lee and Ditko's original teen take on Peter Parker – but put away your radioactive spiders, for thankfully we'll be spared yet another retread of the origin tale. "We are going to take it for granted that people know that, and the specifics," Marvel main man **Kevin Feige** tells *Crave Online*. Hear the planet sigh with relief. "There is a young kid [already] running around New York City in a homemade version of the Spider-Man costume in the MCU, you just don't know it yet. We've already designed the costume, which is different than any of the ones that have come before. And yet ours is classic Spidey..."

HELMER HELL ON AMAZON ISLAND! WONDER WOMAN

► Even invisible jets encounter turbulence. The upcoming big-screen take on Wonder Woman just lost its original choice of director. *Game Of Thrones* helmer **Michelle MacLaren** was set to deliver a solo adventure for the Amazon warrior, building on **Gal Gadot's** debut in the role in 2016's *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*. Now she's gone, citing "creative differences" with paymasters Warner Bros. It's said that MacLaren craved an epic, *Braveheart*-styled origin tale while the studio demanded a more character-driven take, lighter on the action and spectacle. Warner wasted no time replacing MacLaren – her successor is *Monster* helmer **Patty Jenkins**, the original director of *Thor: The Dark World* before she bailed on Marvel, citing "creative differences". Yes, that sweet sound you hear is the irony klaxon. *Wonder Woman* is still targeting a summer 2017 release.

ALSO BURNING



The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo's **NOOMI RAPACE** joining SF thriller *Rupture*... **NICOLE PERLMAN** and **MEG LEFAUVE** writing *Captain Marvel* for Marvel... Sony reviving movie adaptation of **STEPHEN KING's** *The Dark Tower* saga... Warner Bros bagging the screen rights to **JOE HALDEMAN's** Hugo and Nebula-winning novel *The Forever War*, with **CHANNING TATUM** attached... **SELA WARD** playing the US President in *Independence Day 2*, alongside returning stars **BILL PULLMAN** and **JUDD HIRSCH**... *The Wolverine's* **BRIAN TEE** cast as Shredder in the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* sequel... **JEFF DANIELS** joining *The Divergent Series: Allegiant*... StudioCanal and The Picture Company remaking 1973's *Don't Look Now*... **ADAM WINGARD** directing adaptation of horror manga *Death Note* for Warner Bros... Lionsgate teaming with Vertigo Entertainment on a remake of 1997's *Cube*... Sony planning new version of *The Invisible Man*... Twentieth Century Fox moving ahead with *Kingsman: The Secret Service* sequel... Sony pursuing *Insidious* helmer **JAMES WAN** for *Robotech*... **MARCUS NISPEL** directing sea monster tale *Stowaway*... *Green Lantern's* **MICHAEL GREEN** writing *Wolverine 3* along with the *Prometheus* and *Blade Runner* sequels... **BRAD BIRD** writing *The Incredibles 2*... *The Conjuring's* **CHAD** and **CAREY HAYES** teaming with **JAMES WAN** on remake of '80s horror *The Entity*...

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Puppygate

David Langford peers into the murk of the Hugos



■ SF writer David Langford has had a column in *SFX* since issue one.
 ■ David has received 29 Hugo Awards throughout his career.
 ■ His celebrated SF newsletter can be found at <http://news.ansible.co.uk>.
 ■ He is a principal editor of the SF Encyclopedia at <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com>.

The 2015 Hugo nominations caused widespread gloom and outrage. There'd been dark forebodings about a shortlist hijacked by politics – gloating hints on Facebook – and a news embargo broken by the unexpected tweet “Guess Who’s A Hugo Nominee?”

Last year’s Hugos suffered a bloc-vote campaign from conservative US authors claiming discrimination against their favourite military action-adventures. This made them sad; their “Sad Puppies” (SP) slate promoted their own and their buddies’ work, boosting some titles onto the Hugo shortlist though not to victory. Worldcon voters chose otherwise.

The next SP campaign realised the best strategy was to allow those pesky final-ballot voters no choice. There’s a huge spread of nominations for each category, with thousands of Worldcon members’ preferences scattered across hundreds of possibles competing for just five slots on the Hugo ballot. The SPs concocted a complete slate of five nominees for (almost) all Hugo categories, and instructed their supporters to vote the straight ticket chosen by the Central Council.

It worked. Using these morally dodgy *but* legally permissible tactics, a modest percentage of the electorate can indeed dominate the ballot. As first announced, slate choices completely filled both Editor categories, Related Work (nonfiction), Short Story, Novelette and Novella, with only two non-slate finalists for Best Novel. One novelette was later ruled ineligible.

More complications! SP associate Vox Day had created a variant “Rabid Puppies” slate which additionally, shamelessly, pushed himself and stories from his own small press Castalia House. Despite VD’s publicly expressed racism, misogyny and general obnoxiousness, RP was even more successful than SP, with seven Castalia stories



It was painful to see so much lacklustre fiction on the ballot

Yes, the Hugo voters’ vagaries have created past embarrassments, but it was painful to see so much lacklustre fiction – some very poor – railroaded onto the 2015 ballot by slate-voting tactics. Also depressing is having the Hugos dragged into US culture wars: Puppies claim in public that they’re simply promoting exciting adventure fiction with no horrid political subtext, while gloating on blogs that this will make those pinko liberals’ heads explode, har har.

Some people found themselves on the slate without

on the 2015 Hugo ballot. Not bad for a hitherto unknown publisher. Apparently VD has many supporters in games fandom who bought Worldcon memberships and nominated as instructed. Just why is a mystery.

Morally dubious, I wrote, but the SP/RPs say it has to be okay since “obviously” leftist “Social Justice Warriors” must have done this for years to deny past Hugos to Puppy-loved candidates. George RR Martin, who’s watched the SF awards scene since the 1970s, paused work on his latest *Game Of Thrones* novel for several long patient posts at grmm.livejournal.com, explaining that there’s no secret Hugo-controlling cabal.

Alas, he used logic. The Puppy response was that GRRM is sadly deluded.

their knowledge, or without realising this wasn’t a friendly recommendations list but an ideological battle plan. At least one refused nomination before the shortlist was announced, and (unprecedentedly) three more afterwards – one too late for the ballot to be changed. Meanwhile Vox Day, sounding increasingly like a B-movie villain with a volcano lair, warns that if he is thwarted he will destroy the Hugos forever.

What could thwart rabid puppydom? Every Hugo ballot category has one choice that no nomination slate can change. In the most rigged categories, many sad non-puppies plan to vote No Award. **SFX**

David Langford is glad not to be nominated. See many links at <http://bit.ly/hugonoms>.

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Bug Out

Bonnie Burton is at one with insect superheroes

Careful what you swat at when an insect buzzes by your ear, you could end up injuring a superhero. Not all superheroes are Hulk-sized, or even human-sized for that matter.

But the creepy crawly crimefighters rarely get the same accolades as the usual line-up of superheroes. Why should Superman get all the glory when Ant-Man wants to rid the streets of villains too? When was the last time you heard of the exciting exploits of the Blue Beetle?

Spider-Man and his other spider-related superhero pals don't count in this insect line-up. Neither does the Tick. Spiders, mites, scorpions, and ticks are also part of the arachnid family, which means they have eight legs, two body segments, no antennae or wings. Insects have six legs and three main body parts.

What makes insect superheroes extra special is the fact that it proves that the little guy can beat the big, bad bullies. It's the ultimate underdog hero tale; a comic book version of David versus Goliath.

One of the most famous insect superheroes is Ant-Man, and he's very cool, but Ant-Man isn't the only insectoid superhero we should root for. There's Wasp, aka Janet Van Dyne. Just like Ant-Man, she can shrink down to insect size, but she also has bioelectric stingers and insectoid wings that come out from her shoulder blades.

There's a Yellowjacket character in the Ant-Man Marvel universe too, but long before that, Yellowjacket was crime writer Vince Harley by day and a superhero by night from Charlton Comics circa 1944. His origin story is rather stinging. A gang of jewel thieves attempt to murder him by pouring a box of angry Yellowjackets on him – ouch! But luckily, he ends up acquiring the ability to control the flying insects, which helps him fight crime while wearing a yellow and black costume.



Moving on to the Blue Beetle. This character was initially introduced to readers by Fox Comics in 1939 as Dan Garrett – a police officer who gained superpowers from a mysterious vitamin. A new 2006 incarnation saw Jaime Reyes as the Blue Beetle, with an alien Egyptian scarab bonded to his spine. When Jaime is in danger the scarab activates and crawls out onto his back, and generates a suit of armour around his body.

The Wasp isn't the only female insect superhero keeping us all safe. We also have the Bumblebee, aka Karen Beecher. She has no superpowers outside of what her cool hi-tech bumblebee costume gives her, which includes strength, speed, agility, flight and protection. She can also create painful electric bursts that sting like a bee. But one

worst ways possible. He's like the drummer in *This Is Spinal Tap* or Kenny in *South Park*.

I think I love Grasshopper because even though he's a bona fide superhero, he just doesn't get the same level of respect that Ant-Man, the Wasp, Bumblebee or even Blue Beetle gets. Grasshopper just can't catch a break. He's got great powers due to an impressive suit, but he never stays alive long enough to enjoy them. He's unlucky in everything but he's still a superhero worth remembering. Here's hoping Marvel gives Grasshopper his own movie, even though it might be one of the shortest superhero movies ever made. **SFX**

Bonnie reckons the Green Hornet deserves an honorable mention too.



Our columnist Bonnie Burton, a San Francisco-based author, has written a number of books including her latest – *The Star Wars Craft Book*.

Bonnie appears on the massive "Geek & Sundry" and "Stan Lee's World Of Heroes" YouTube channels.

More of her writing can be found at www.grrl.com.

They're proof that the little guy can beat big, bad bullies

of her most important roles isn't as a bee hero but as DC Comics' first black female superhero!

My favourite insectoid superhero has to be Marvel's Grasshopper. He was initially created as a joke by writer Dan Slott, to mock the tendency of comic book companies to introduce new, poorly conceived superhero characters only to kill them off dramatically within a few issues. What makes Grasshopper so great is that his costumed identity keeps changing hands because everyone ends up dying in the

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THIS MONTH'S
LETTERS
COMPILED BY

Ian Berriman
Reviews
Editor

► An eclectic postbag this month. Issue 260's Leonard Nimoy tribute cover met with widespread approval, as did Netflix's *Daredevil*. Plus, after the plot of *Rogue One* was revealed, many of you shared what else you'd like to see from the *Star Wars* Anthology movies. Mostly because we asked you to!

WRITE IN AND WIN!



We're never less than generous here at SFX, so don't think we won't reward Star Letter writers with something for their efforts. Oh no. Mark Dabbs over there will soon be receiving *Deathfire*, the latest instalment in the *Horus Heresy* series. It's written by Nick Kyme, known for his popular *Salamander* series. If you're in the unlucky position of not being Mark Dabbs then it will be available through the Black Library and Games Workshop websites for £25.



Nimoy: sci-fi god and supporter of West Midlands football club.

GOODBYE TO THE GENTLEMAN OF SF

It's so ironic that Leonard Nimoy's most beloved and well-known role as Spock was a character who was known as being so unemotional and clinical. When I had the privilege to meet him at a convention in Milton Keynes it was clear to all that we could feel Leonard's warmth, sincerity and goodness of humanity seeping through to the very core of the man. In his acting career as Spock he made you feel that in every episode he appeared in, it somehow made the world a better, safer place! He was an honourable man who lived an honourable life.

I had to change a shift and do a difficult day at the hospital where I work in order to attend and see him. Looking back now I'm thankful that I was able to do this and meet him, in what was to be his last British appearance at a convention. He

grandly held my Walsall football scarf as well, for my book project.

Mark Dabbs, Walsall

► Thanks for sharing, Mark. Your memory of Leonard Nimoy is representative of what many readers have told us since we paid tribute to him in issue 260. He was a man responsible for a great deal of joy, and your photograph reminded us how much he is missed.

THIS COULD BE YOU! EMAIL [SFX@FUTURENET.COM](mailto:sfx@futurenet.com)



HOT TOPIC STAR WARS ANTHOLOGY FILMS

I would love Mara Jade from the Expanded Universe to have her own movie and be elevated to official canon! I'd hate to see Disney cock-up twice over and pull an Avengers/Black Widow-style mess, with no female-led *Star Wars* movies for years on end. Mara Jade has such a great character arc and so much opportunity for great action scenes. And depending where you take her story she could be tied into the main franchise via Skywalker.

Casting-wise, how does *Battlestar's* Katee Sackhoff look with red hair? Let's find out please! (Watch *Oculus* - Ed) Caveat: do not costume her in that hideous, tacky, fan-servicey catsuit! It's such an illogical outfit for someone of her profession/lifestyle.

Amy Dohnt, via Facebook

Aside from the obvious ones – backstories for Han and Chewie and Boba Fett – I think the most interesting potential movies for existing *Star Wars* characters would be focused on Princess Leia prior to *A New Hope* (how does she go from adopted royalty to Rebel leader?) and Obi-Wan Kenobi (what was he doing between *Revenge Of The Sith* and *A New Hope*?).

George Lucas massively screwed up with Darth Maul – killed too soon, never given the opportunity to develop into a fully-fledged character. A movie on his backstory could be tremendous if handled properly.

Mark Rae, Montrose

Samuel L Jackson in a standalone Mace Windu movie based on/adapted from/inspired by *Yojimbo*. It would actually give



Now that's a good old fashioned explosion.



Should Mace Windu strike out alone?

"I'd like a series of spaghetti Western-style Boba Fett films"

big Sam something to do with the character, and take the Jedi back to their creative roots. That would blow my mind!

Ogeeraffgo, via [GamesRadar+](#)

I'd like to see a series of spaghetti Western-style Boba Fett movies, with titles such as *Today All Ewoks Die At Dawn*, *Bring Me The Head Of Jar Jar Binks*, *Death Wears A Jetpack*, *A Coffin For Han Solo*, and *Greedo Shoots Last, Dies First*.

Glen Harrison

I'd like to see a series of movies telling how Darth Vader found out about Luke, and also the events

between *Episode IV* and *V*.

David Cole, via [Facebook](#)

Christina Hendricks to play the tyrannical leader of a crazed matriarchal society building a new Death Star; Ryan Reynolds and Will Ferrell to play co-workers for the Empire who go on a bender and find the Force.

@SciFitenisGamer, via [twitter](#)

A prequel to *Knights Of The Old Republic* would be cool. Or one set sometime afterwards. Just a movie set in an era where there are lots of Jedi and lots of Sith in a major conflict would be awesome!

remosu37, via [GamesRadar+](#)

THIS MONTH IN SCI-FI HISTORY

SFX 198
August
2010



5 YEARS
AGO

Cap's shield trailed a movie preview. We were also apoplectic at the finale of *Lost*. "Is that it?!" spat our reviewer.

SFX 133
August
2005



10 YEARS
AGO

We talked to the *Fantastic Four* lot. Oh, and John Barrowman, who confessed to once having sex in a lay-by.

SFX 67
August
2000



15 YEARS
AGO

Buffy's Alyson Hannigan told us co-star Julie Benz was, "the meanest person ever to me. I didn't like her." Yikes.

CASH IN THE AT-AT

Your sci-fi memorabilia valued by the experts from auctioneers Vectis



Jason McLaughlin sent us a pic of an original *Star Wars* poster from 1978. "My father was friends with the manager of the local Classic Cinema, and he gave him loads of unwanted cinema posters for me to hang up on my wall," says Jason. "Most of them got permanently stuck to one of my bedroom walls with wallpaper paste as a cool alternative to normal wallpaper. For some reason (thankfully) I decided to stick this

on the adjacent wall with just your normal Blu-Tack and drawing pins!"

Adam Carter of Vectis says:

What a poster to have on your bedroom wall, Jason. And thanks for saving it by not pasting it to the wall! We can only imagine (in despair) what other greats you had acting as wallpaper! The *Star Wars* poster you own is the third of the regular British quad posters, often referred to as the "Awards Style", and was printed in 1978 after *Star Wars* won

awards at the Oscars. The other two styles include the standard quad, which is almost identical to yours, but lacks any awards information; and the first *Star Wars* quad, known as the "Hildebrandt quad", named after the brothers who designed it, also printed in 1977.

VALUE

Condition is a major aspect. A rolled poster without any pin holes or Blu-Tack will command a premium over one that has been folded and has marks.

£300-£400

If you've got a piece of memorabilia you'd like us to feature, send us a photo of your item (in focus, well lit against a plain background, and at least 1,000 pixels across) with a few words about what it means to you, to sfx@futurenet.com, using the subject line Cash In The AT-AT. Ask The SFXperts will return next month.



SOAPBOX

SFX WRITERS' PERSONAL RANTS

Community Editor Jordan Farley wonders if we've reached Peak Superhero



Gotham: yet another superhero show. Kinda.

In 2016 there will be seven major superhero movies released: *Captain America: Civil War*, *Doctor Strange*, *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*, *Suicide Squad*, *Deadpool*, *X-Men: Apocalypse* and *Gambit*. Add to that all the weekly live-action superhero shows – *Arrow*, *The Flash*, *Supergirl*, *Gotham*, *Daredevil*, *The Flash/Arrow* spin-off *Legends Of Tomorrow*, *Agents Of SHIELD*, *Luke Cage* and AKA *Jessica Jones*, plus fellow MCU resident Agent Carter – and simply put we've reached superhero saturation levels.

Some perspective: that's more than one comic book blockbuster every two months, and enough TV to watch one episode every night for almost half a year. Quality levels are unsustainable at that rate. Sooner rather than later the superpowered bubble is going to burst.

There are very good reasons why superheroes are dominating screens – since the dawn of the MCU live-action superhero shenanigans have never been as critically and commercially successful. Here's my dilemma: I love superhero films, and currently watch every superhero show on the box, but the cracks are starting to show. DC's plans to build a big-screen universe seem misguided at

best, disastrous at worst, *Agents Of SHIELD* is starting to leave me cold again after piquing my interest at the tail end of season one, *Gotham* hasn't come close to matching its potential and *Legends Of Tomorrow* fails to excite me in the slightest. Was anyone really crying out for (the now abandoned) Mockingbird/Lance Hunter *Agents Of SHIELD* spin-off series?

I'd argue we've already reached optimum exposure to comic book adaptations and

Studios need to carefully monitor their output

studios need to carefully monitor their superhero output over the next few years, or risk pushing people's interest levels over the precipice. As the Batman movies proved in the mid-'90s, all it takes is a couple of high-profile stinkers to do the damage, and with studios stretching themselves increasingly thin it's looking more and more likely that will happen. Not everyone can be Marvel and if everyone greedily grabs too much of the pie too quickly there'll be nothing left but a dish full of crumbs.

Star Wars: The Dawn Of The Jedi, a movie about the origins of the Jedi and Sith, and how they discovered the Force. (*Dark Horse* already did this as a comic series, of course – Ian)

John Paul Darbyshire, via Facebook

A *Rogue Squadron* movie would be cool – let's see what happened to Wedge and co!

Browncoat, via GamesRadar+

I'm totally sold on *Bring Me The Head Of Jar Jar Binks*, especially if it features a Peckinpah-esque slow-mo sequence where his body dances in the air as it's shaken by multiple bullet impacts.

UNDER THE SKIN

There's been a lot of debate about casting black actors as white characters, with Jamie Foxx as *Electro* (a white villain) in *Amazing Spider-Man 2*, Michael B Jordan as the *Human Torch* (a white superhero) in *Fantastic Four* and Samuel L Jackson as *Nick Fury* (a white character originally in various old Marvel movies).

We've also had debate on if the next *James Bond* should be black, with Idris Elba emerging as a favourite to take over from Daniel Craig, but surely if a character was written as white they should be played by a white actor? In this daft, politically correct world if you speak out you instantly get branded racist, but imagine the uproar if someone made *12 Years A Slave* but cast Tom Hanks as Solomon Northup – or, as that isn't a genre movie, cast someone like Jason Statham as *Black Panther*? Surely it should work both ways?

The issue of *Doctor Who* and if the next *Doctor* should be black or even a woman is slightly different, because technically although he's always been played by a white English male (*Er... three have been*

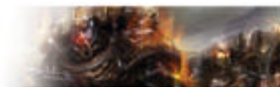


Scottish, actually – Ian), the *Doctor* is alien so probably could regenerate into a black male, or a white or even black woman. We now have a female Master, but I want a male version of female Time Lords like Romana, otherwise it's just political correctness.

Robert Graham, Lincoln

Sorry, but that's utter rot. Firstly, the ethnicity of the character is central to the stories of Solomon Northup, a real-life 19th century slave, and *Black Panther*, an African prince. It's not with *James Bond*, where there's no good reason to set arbitrary limits on who can play the character. If Bond can be Scottish or blond, he can be black. In two of the books it's said he resembles bandleader Hoagy Carmichael, but no





Pain really means something in *Daredevil*.

casting director ever stuck to that. As for Romana: fine by me, but why on Earth would they bring back a relatively obscure companion who was last seen 34 years ago?!

DARING TO BE DIFFERENT

Daredevil is a very rare animal: a show that knows the exact tone it wants to aim at, and does it quite spectacularly. The acting is superb, but it's the writing that needs commending. Yes, it's darker than the Marvel Universe films, but that's the character. It's been said that *Daredevil* is one bad day away from crossing the line, so darkness makes sense. Also it isn't done just for titillation, there's rhyme and reason for it. Finally, that title sequence – just brilliant! It's haunting and stunning to look at, but again makes sense, almost showing how Matt sees the world. Can't wait for the rest of the Marvel Universe Netflix shows to come out!

Mike Garner, Moorends

The fight sequences are directed superbly, the banter had me spraying my morning coffee, Ben Urich's head is fantastically wrinkly... But the biggest stand-out is the characterisation. This is what comic book shows can be like if they learn the lessons from the *Breaking Bads* of this world. If there are any concerned about the

collapse of the superhero bubble, let *Daredevil* allay your fears.

Matt Murdock has two duelling personalities, vigilante/lawyer and Catholic/horned costume enthusiast, to Walter White's one, loving father/monstrous drug kingpin, meaning this show has the potential to be two times better. Just dwell on that!

Tim Moore

Daredevil was way better than any of us dared to believe, a compelling, gritty crime drama that just happened to have a superhero in it. Top marks to Netflix and Marvel for allowing a corner of the MCU to grow up.

DEAD WRONG

Re: the Soapbox in 260 by Alex Cox. I was surprised by the anti-zombie sentiment, but "each to their own", I thought. I read on and was amazed to see his statement, "zombies are rarely pitched to the intellectual crowd". The final straw came with his comment, "I'm not going to pretend to have seen anything zombie".

Well listen here Coxy, if you ain't seen it, then you aren't qualified to write any derogatory pieces about it.

Matt Hankinson, Nottingham

Alex replies: There's a distinction between "anything", and "everything", which is the word I used! If I have to watch

"Daredevil's writing needs commending"

everything in the zombie canon, *Big Tits Dragon: Hot Spring* *Zombie Vs Stripper 5* is going first in the playlist.

PAPER PERFECTION

It's your 20th birthday, and I've been struggling to think of something new to say about your wonderful publication. Then I read Nick's tribute to Leonard Nimoy.

Yes, the world is changing. Yes, it's now possible to get access to news the instant that it happens. But there's still a need for curated material regarding the latest happenings in all thing SF and F. There's a place for considered articles that are more than just knee-jerk reactions; that have the weight of analysis and experience behind them. There's a place for something that'll tell me about new things that I won't have the urge to skip past because I know there'll be a cat video to watch instead. And there's a need for me to be able to access all that without worrying that it'll cost me hundreds of pounds to replace if I drop it down the loo! And that's what SFX provides.

Here's to another 20 years!

The Llama God, The Dark Lands
Beyond the Wall

Aw shucks, thanks Llama God. Now wash your hands.



How does he smell? Terrible.

WAHF

WE ALSO HEARD FROM

● **Chase Masterson** ("SFX stood up for geekdom way before it was cool. Love and respect!");
● **Mary Bicknell** ("Happy 20th birthday – the years may have zoomed by but here you are still looking great");
● **Tobias Sturt** ("I remember sitting in the pub amazed at this mag that catered to my every nerd need with such panache");
● **Steven Ellis** ("Thanks for all the friends your forum helped me find – I wouldn't have a son if it wasn't for you");
● **Danny** ("SFX has been a constant reminder that I am not alone and other geeks existed in the world");
● **Verity Hayter** ("Because of SFX, I've made some of the best friends I've ever had");
● **Daft_Aider** ("Still remember me and my schoolmate combining our lunch money for the first issue. Now I feel old!");
● **la_jellybean** ("For years you were my sole link to geekery, then you became my online home, and I met the love of my life there. Thank you");
● **CherryBomb** ("I discovered conventions, cosplay and half the people I know online because of you!");
● **Clown Asylum** ("Thanks for two decades of peerless SFF journalism, and the friends I made cos of your existence");
● **Allan Sansome** ("Jeez that went quick, remember buying issue three – and having to search top shelves for the first few years!");
● **Stefan Mohamed** ("May you still be produced and enjoyed within the sentient space-faring nano-cloud that humanity eventually becomes");
● **Lisa Keenan** ("SFX flung me headfirst into fandom, be it *Buffy*, *Smallville*, *Supernatural* or *Being Human*. Thank you!");
● **Saud Undre** ("You guys keep me sane and proud of my geeky self and nerdy bones");
● **Ian** ("The main thing I adore is that the magazine reads like you are with mates!");
● **mars_stu** ("Thank you for 20 years of fun – and for making sci-fi fans feel wanted, loved, and respected") and many many more. You guys are the best.



SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH THE SCI-FI WORLD!

Write in and you'll win some books if we feature you in the star letter slot. Email us at sfx@futurenet.com or you can try Post Apocalypse, SFX, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA if you're not taken with technology.

Wishlist

Illustrating what you want to see in new SF films and television.

This Month: cybercrime heads to Hollywood with *Ghost In The Shell*

Ghost In The Shell

YOUR TOP 5 REQUESTS

Smart Sci-fi

1 *Ghost In The Shell* is one of the most thought-provoking anime movies ever made, and you don't want to see it go down the explodey route when it heads West. "Just don't dumb it down for the US teen audience," says **Peter Regan**. "Remember that *Ghost* is a classic that deserves respect."

Section 9

2 Despite the controversy surrounding Scarlett Johansson's casting as Kusanagi, she's earned some serious genre cred playing Black Widow, so we've no doubt she'll do a superb job. **Claire Lim**, meanwhile, has a brilliant idea for who should play her partner: "Ron Perlman could work as Batou."

Don't Be The Matrix

3 *Ghost In The Shell* was a crucial influence on *The Matrix*, but the anime has a style of its own and **Doug Charles** wants the live-action version to retain that. "Don't make it *The Matrix 2.0*. No leather trench coats, no ubiquitous sunglasses."

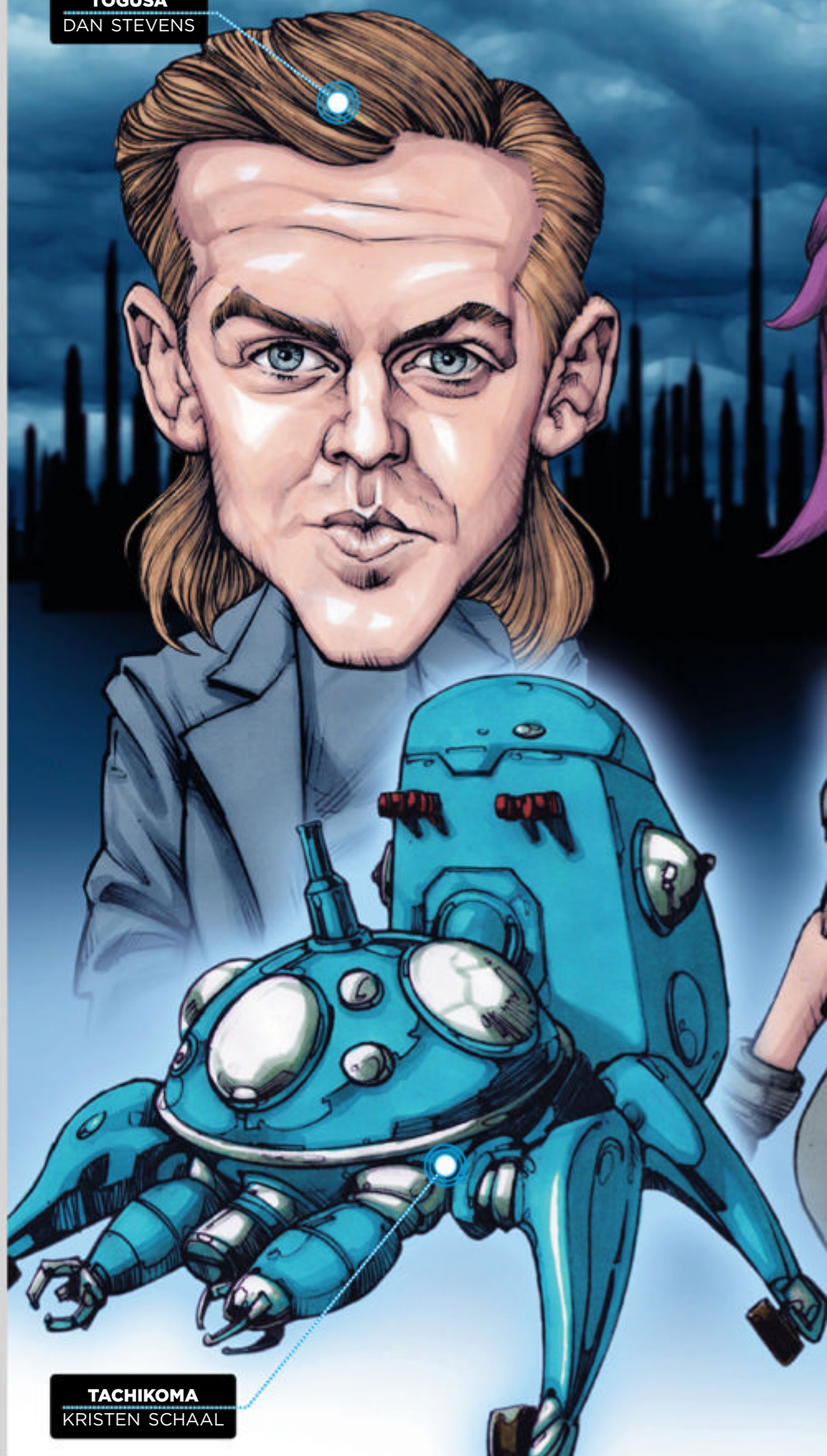
Tachikoma Everywhere

4 If there aren't adorable robotic Tachikoma in every frame it sounds like you'll be boycotting the film in droves. "Tachikoma, loads of them," says **Peter Sturgeon**. **Ian Coomber** adds, "As long as they're done correctly, of course."

A Faithful Adaptation

5 Most of all, you wanted a live-action *Ghost In The Shell* that stayed true to the original. "The anime is outstanding. If they can capture any of that they'll be doing well. Sadly, they've tried it before and fell short with *Aeon Flux*," says **Andy Hall**.

TOGUSA
DAN STEVENS



TACHIKOMA
KRISTEN SCHAAL

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL GARNER



THE PUPPET MASTER
WILLEM DAFÖE (VOICE)

MOTOKO KUSANAGI
SCARLETT JOHANSSON

BATOU
RON PERLMAN

ARE YOU LISTENING?

Don't make us ghost-hack you, Hollywood

■ A Japanese actress playing the main role **Kirsty Leanne**

■ I don't want to see a live-action version, thanks. **Stephen Floyd**

■ So long as it's not as bad as *Dragonball Evolution* I'll be happy. **Pete Elwes**

■ A cybertank battle that goes on for more than two minutes, like the original. **Douglas Lanson**

■ I'd love a soundtrack that was inspired by, if not identical, to Kenji Kawai's original.

John Burrell

■ Make the plot more comprehensible. I never understood a thing that was going on in the original.

Cass Selby

■ Tone down the nudity. It works in animation but could feel gratuitous in live action.

Tracey Bullock

■ Please Hollywood, leave well alone, you don't know what you're doing. **Jason Phillips**

■ Cover the Laughing Man case from *Stand Alone Complex* rather than The Puppet Master. Or set up Laughing Man for the sequel. **Amy Garey**

■ Mamoru Oshii recently made the leap to live action, get him to direct instead of Rupert Sanders – *Snow White And The Huntsman* was bobbins. **Ann Easton**

■ Jennifer Lawrence or Noomi Rapace as the Major. **Syd Hunter**

■ For the love of all that is holy don't put Scarlett Johansson's head on a young girl's body at the end or you may scar me for life. **Matthew Ogden**

■ Don't simplify the story for the sake of the action. Part of what makes *Ghost In The Shell* great are the complex ideas it tackles. **Elliot Thursten**

■ I always preferred *Akira*, so I'm glad that seems to be stuck in development hell rather than this. **Carey Ness**

■ As little CGI as possible. I want the world to feel real. **Ed Bond**

■ Don't bother with the big screen, adapt *Stand Alone Complex* on AMC or HBO.

Nick Carl

■ A ghost and a shell.

Tom Kennedy

coming soon

Aquaman and Rogue One

Brainstorm the first big screen adventure for DC's aquatic ace, and thinking caps on for *Star Wars: Rogue One*.



Send in your ideas about our current Wishlist by visiting bit.ly/SFXwishlist

Event Horizon

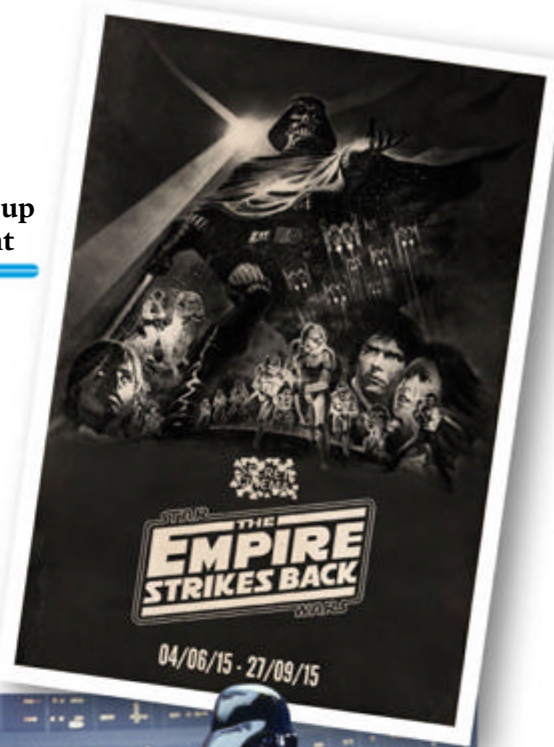
Because meeting up is every fan's right

DON'T MISS IT!

Secret Cinema Presents Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back

4 June-27 September 2015, a top secret location in London

Jordan Farley speaks to Secret Cinema founder Fabien Riggall about this summer's hottest ticket



Duck!!!



Quiet, Dad's talking.



Dagobah: nice spot for a breather.

SINCE ITS FORMATION IN 2007 Secret Cinema has specialised in immersive film screenings, taking its audiences to a mental hospital for *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, a prison for *The Shawshank Redemption* and to 1955 Hill Valley for a staggeringly ambitious *Back To The Future* experience.

Never people to rest on their laurels, this summer Secret Cinema are heading to a galaxy far, far away for a *Star Wars*-themed evening which will culminate in a special screening of *The Empire Strikes Back*. Naturally, Event Horizon deployed probe droids for a spot of reconnaissance, but it turns out that Secret Cinema founder Fabien Riggall is even better with a blaster than Han Solo.

"We have the most incredible space and we are a very large number of humans trying to build the best fan experience possible... I sound like JJ Abrams and Kathy Kennedy trying not to reveal secrets!"

What we do know is that the evening begins

with a narrative set before *A New Hope*. We've been recruited by the Rebel Alliance, who are in hiding on Earth and going under the name RebelX. Our first mission is to embark for Alderaan, join Leia and assist in stealing the schematics for the first Death Star. What happens then is as much of a mystery as what's going on under a Jawa's hood.

For Riggall *Star Wars* was the next obvious step following the success of *Back To The Future*. "The original trilogy is what gave me the impetus to do all this. It's been something I've been trying to do for 10 years, ever since we launched Secret Cinema. We've always wanted to do *Star Wars*."

"*The Empire Strikes Back* is an amazing film to bring to life, and *A New Hope* is an amazing film to live through. So there's something about the audience living through the narrative of *A New Hope* and activating the world of *The Empire Strikes Back*. The important thing for me is the environment, the feeling and the emotion rather than the

replication. Of course there's going to be worlds that we're creating, but it's very much an inspiration rather than a replication."

After a troubled start to last year's event which saw the opening weekend cancelled, Riggall insists they've learned from past mistakes. "We obviously had a tough beginning to that show. It's given us a lot of learning in terms of how we proceed and how we can make it easier. It was a heartbreaking thing to have to cancel the first weekend last year, but we got 85,000 people to go to 1955 Hill Valley and most of them came out happy."

Despite the mystery one thing's for sure: it will be unlike anything you've ever seen. "We're very different from *Star Wars* Celebration or those Comic-Con experiences. That's not to undermine that because that's an amazing thing in its own right, but we're really trying to create these worlds. I'm hopeful that we're going to take fans on a ride and that they'll see the integrity of our ambition."

www.secretcinema.org

DON'T MISS IT

Edge-Lit 4

11 July 2015, Derby Quad

The literary event attracting the biggest names in genre fiction

IN JUST FOUR SHORT YEARS DERBY'S

premier fiction festival Edge-Lit has grown from young upstart to one of the highlights of the con calendar, bringing together the UK's best genre writers for a day of panels, readings and workshops designed to help aspiring writers.

The event was launched by organiser Alex Davis after almost a decade running Alt.Fiction in Derby and Leicester. "I'm absolutely delighted to see how much the event has progressed in that time – this year in particular promises to be our biggest and best yet," says Davis.

This year's guest list includes Jenny T Colgan, Mark Charan Newton, Sarah Pinborough, Justina Robson and Adrian Tchaikovsky, alongside a six-strong guest of honour line-up. "I invited six guests a long time back, thinking I'd be lucky to get three, but to be welcoming MR Carey, John Connolly, Joanne Harris, Paul McAuley, Claire North and Samantha Shannon to the event is fantastic – there's a great array of award winners and bestsellers there, and some really fascinating authors," Davis says. "The line-up on the whole is the best we've ever had, and that's been due to some incredible support from the UK publishing scene."

Other highlights include Edge-Lit's legendary raffle and quiz (both with top prizes), and a range of dealer tables which anyone can browse and buy from, even without a ticket. And would-be writers take note – there'll be a series of workshops throughout the day from some of the best writers in the world designed to give you inspiration, advice, and help you break into the world of genre fiction. "I like to think we're one of the best events around for aspiring writers – we have 13 writing workshops taking place on the day, more than double last year, because the thread was so popular in 2014."

Tickets are available now and cost £30 each. Travelling across the country? Hotel rooms are available at a discount. For details and a full schedule which you can download head to <http://bit.ly/Edge-Lit4>.



Joanne Harris (*The Gospel Of Loki*).

© KYTE PHOTOGRAPHY



MR Carey (*The Girl With All The Gifts*).

© CHARLIE HOPKINSON



Claire North (*Touch*).



Paul McAuley (*The Quiet War*).

DON'T MISS IT!

London Anime and Gaming Con

4-5 July 2015, London Met Uni

The cosplay, anime and gaming con is expanding

COSPLAY HAS NEVER BEEN bigger. Need proof? Later this year the London Anime and Gaming Con, which also has cosplay at its core, is launching new events outside of Leicester and London for the first time, starting with Ireland Cosplay Con in Dublin on 6-7 June.

The Japanese culture event will host its annual summer con in London on 4-5 July, moving to Cardiff in August, Leicester in September and Bristol in October. Expanding to include the rest of the country was only natural for a con that is inclusive by nature.

"LAGC's motto has always been 'for the fans by the fans', a con that isn't run by the

corporate machines but by the fans themselves, therefore knowing exactly what the attendees want!" Rebecca Moriarty, Head of Press and Guests says.

This year's London event will welcome international cosplay guest Ani-Mia and *Pokémon* narrator Mike Pollock, with reasonably priced tickets and free autographs for its youth-skewing audience. But LAGC is about more than meeting famous folk, it's about meeting like-minded fans.

"Interactivity is a big thing," Moriarty explains. "Our event is about experiencing new things and meeting new people. It's part of the reason we hold community meets all year round, so you can stay in touch with your new convention friends, or if you've never been to a con before it's a great way to make friends before you go."

www.londonanimecon.com



"Not the eyes! Not the eyes!"

© REBECCA MORIARTY

UPCOMING

Dates meet diary, diary meet dates...

Andercon

13-14 June

Celebrate 50 years of *Thunderbirds* and all things Anderson with the second annual convention dedicated to the puppet maestro. www.andercon.co.uk

Geek Central Bath

4 July

Geek Central returns to SFX's back yard with even more stalls, traders and gaming events. Plus, cosplay and retro gaming on a cinema screen! <http://www.geekcentralhq.com>



London Film and Comic Con

17-19 July

If it's star wattage you're after then look no further. This year's event welcomes Noah Wyle, Charles Dance and Michael J Fox to the big smoke. <http://www.londonfilmandcomiccon.com>

Lavecon

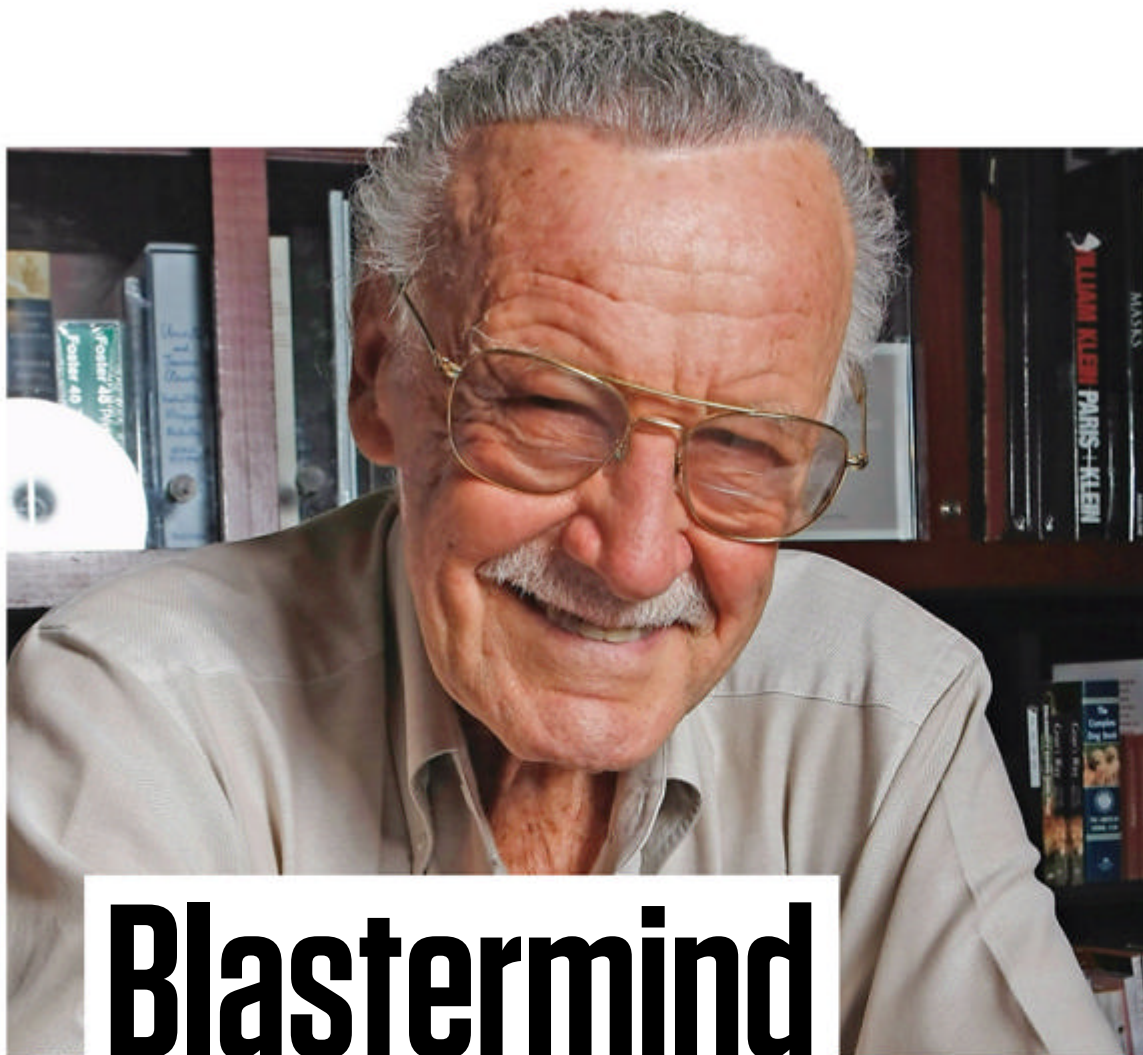
11-12 July

Celebrate top space sim *Elite: Dangerous*, and sci-fi in general, at the Northamptonshire gaming, cosplay and literary con. <http://laveradio.com/lavecon-2015>

Nine Worlds

7-9 August

The London geekfest returns for another year of inclusive film, literature and science fandom. <https://ninenworlds.co.uk>



Blastermind

Face front, true believers! It's a peerlessly pulse-pounding Stan "The Man" Lee quiz! Excelsior!



- 1 What is Stan Lee's real name?
- 2 Why did he change his name?
- 3 What was the name of Stan's regular editorial column in Marvel comics?
- 4 Stan's 1941 comic book debut was a text story – which hero did it feature?
- 5 What did Stan award Marvel readers who had spotted a goof?

- 6 Which Marvel hero starred in a Stan-scripted, drug-themed story controversially published without the Comic Code Authority's seal of approval?
- 7 Who was the first artist on Stan's Spidey newspaper strip?
- 8 Which Kevin Smith movie does Stan appear in?
- 9 Spider-Man first appeared in which issue of what title?



- 10 Who was the last Marvel superhero Stan created?
- 11 Which '90s TV icon voiced Stan's burlesque-themed superheroine Stripparella?

- 12 Which of these characters did he not co-create? a) Thor b) Captain America c) Hawkeye

- 13 Stan Lee and Jack Kirby made early, faceless cameos in which Marvel title?



- 14 Name the two celebs Tony Stark mistakes Stan for in the *Iron Man* movies.

- 15 What was Stan's first ever cameo in a live-action Marvel adaptation?

- 16 Stan created the Fantastic Four's postman – and played him on screen, too. What's his name?



- 17 Who were the first Marvel heroes created by Stan and Jack Kirby?

- 18 Which New York street did Stan and his family live on from 1952 to 1980? a) Parker Lane b) Richards Lane c) Banner Lane?

- 19 What colour skin did Stan originally choose for the Incredible Hulk?

- 20 What does Stan's sign-off "Excelsior!" actually mean?

ANSWERS 1 Stanley Lieber 2 He wanted to keep it for the "great American novel" he aimed to write 3 Stan's Soapbox 4 Captain America 5 A No-Prize 6 Spider-Man 7 John Romita Sr 8 *Mallrats* 9 *Amazing Fantasy* 10 She-Hulk 11 Pamela Anderson 12 b) Captain America 13 *The Fantastic Four* 14 Larry King and Hugh Hefner 15 He played a jury foreman in 1989's *The Trial Of The Incredible Hulk* 16 Willie Lumpkin 17 The Fantastic Four 18 b) Richards Lane 19 Grey 20 Upward and onward to greater glory

HOW DID YOU DO?
Match your brains...



0-5
The Hulk



6-10
Sandman



11-15
Thor



16-19
Doctor Doom



20
Reed Richards

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TOTAL FILM

This issue *Total Film* hitches its cart to the sci-fi wagon, with a huge feature on the hottest sci-fi moves on the horizon, word from Arnie and beyond on *Terminator Genisys*, and an insider's perspective on the *Star Wars* Celebration in Anaheim. All this plus an exclusive chat with Chris Pratt, Colin Trevorrow and Bryce Dallas Howard about *Jurassic World*. Sir Ian McKellen grilled in the big *TF* interview, a look at upcoming horror reboots, a free interactive *Terminator* poster, and a whole lot more. Grab it from Earth's finest newsagents right now.



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SFX and *Total Film* celebrate the return of *Game Of Thrones* in *The Ultimate Guide To Fantasy*, with a preview of season five, interviews, a sightseeing tour of King's Landing (aka Dubrovnik) and episode guides for seasons three and four. Other delights include lots on *Harry Potter* and Peter Jackson's Middle-earth hexalogy. Also out: *George Lucas: The Ultimate Celebration*, which not only features classic content on *Star Wars*, but also Indiana Jones, *Labyrinth*, *Willow* and more (including that Duck!). They're both on sale now or you can order copies online, with free postage, at <http://bit.ly/filmguides>.



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"My life is a sartorial maze"



Richard Edwards meets
JURASSIC WORLD star
Chris Pratt and director
Colin Trevorrow, who are
trying to recapture the magic
(and science) of the original
movie two decades on

WHEN WILL PEOPLE

ever learn? The original Jurassic Park may have been doomed to failure, a living parable of the dangers of mankind messing around with nature, yet something – hubris, greed, the need for a blockbuster sequel – made reopening the prehistoric theme park inevitable. And besides, what are the chances of fossilised lightning striking twice?

Now, 22 years after the original movie and 14 years since the franchise's last outing in *Jurassic Park III*, something really has survived. *Jurassic World* sees the series returning to Isla Nublar, the tropical island that was the setting of Steven Spielberg's first bout of carnivore carnage, and finds a fully functioning mega-theme park, complete with all the usual fast food concessions and some very special attractions – think of a Disney World where Mickey Mouse and Goofy would rather hunt and kill you than pose for a photo.

For director Colin Trevorrow, returning to the original island after two movies set at test site Isla Sorna was something of a no-brainer. "I felt that the sequels to the first movie had to operate off a different equation than the first one did, and that was to their disadvantage," he tells *SFX* on the Universal lot in Los Angeles. "The equation of the first movie was, you're going to a place that I guarantee is perfectly safe, yet it turns out it's a horrifying nightmare. The second and third one, you're going to a place that you expect to be a horrifying nightmare and sure enough it is. To me, changing that equation made it difficult to recapture the feeling of the original, so with this movie, a fundamental similarity is that equation. It allows everything to rest on something that will set up a ball that we could spike.

"After that it was about finding a story and a set of themes and characters that I felt could be as indelible as the ones from the first movie. And I do not say that lightly – that is an extremely high bar to set, but if you're going to have the balls to do a *Jurassic Park* movie, you'd better set your bar there or go home."



TAKING RISKS

If that sounds like fighting talk, Trevorrow's desire to do it the right way might just be the reason his take on the movie would be the one to get the greenlight. *Jurassic Park IV* has been languishing in Development Hell for years – pretty much since *Jurassic Park III* opened – and Trevorrow, fresh off breakout indie time-travel drama *Safety Not Guaranteed*, decided to abandon previous drafts when he came on board.

"I read the draft that was the most recent, and it wasn't something that I understood, I didn't know how to direct it," he recalls. "I said, 'I'm not going to do a good job with this, I don't know what it is.' So I asked Steven [Spielberg] if I could bring in my writing partner Derek Connolly and if we could take a stab at writing a different movie using some of

"Strange, these things looked so safe... and cool. Actually, mostly just cool."



the ideas that Steven had had 10–12 years ago and given to all these writers. He said okay."

Writing the script at night, Trevorrow would use his days to work with the storyboard artists and pre-visualisation boffins to design sequences that would wow Spielberg, effectively the benefactor of the *Jurassic* franchise.

"It was a very college kid move on our part, but I didn't have a choice," says Trevorrow. "My worst possible nightmare is not to lose the

opportunity of making a *Jurassic Park* movie; it's to make a *bad Jurassic Park* movie. One of the first things I said to Steven and Frank [Marshall, producer] when we sat down is, 'Look if this thing is terrible, the two of you continue to be legends. I will never be heard from again.'"

With Spielberg wooed and Trevorrow given the keys to the park, a new threat (with big sharp pointy teeth) reared its ugly head: when Spielberg had unleashed computer-generated ➔

"If you're going to have the balls to do a *Jurassic Park* movie, you'd better set your bar high or go home"





TAKE PRATT

The Guardians Of The Galaxy star is walking with dinosaurs



This time last year, Chris Pratt was still best known as the dweeby but loveable Andy Dwyer in TV's *Parks And Recreation*. A strict exercise regime, a six-pack and a *Guardians Of The Galaxy* later, he's the most sought after action star in Hollywood, soon to be seen in *The Magnificent Seven* and (rumour klaxon!) maybe even as a rebooted Indiana Jones. "I feel like I went from being a guy that big people at movie studios didn't know, to a guy who, if you put me in your movie and it doesn't do well, you probably won't get fired because you'll be like, 'Well, I hired Chris Pratt. What else was I supposed to do?' So that's changed a little bit."

How big a deal for you was *Jurassic Park* when it first came out?

☞ A huge deal. I was 13. I saw it in the theatre twice, opening weekend. A huge fan. And I felt like I learned a lot about science watching that movie. Michael Crichton does that well with his books. All the exposition is not boring. Like when they talk about DNA and gene sequencing, you walk away from that movie thinking, "Wow, I know a lot about that now. I can probably make a dinosaur!" [laughs]

How would you describe your character, Owen Grady?

☞ I wouldn't call him a park ranger. He works at the park, but kind of on the outskirts in a facility that's

researching animal behaviour with Raptors. He's not part of the show or the spectacle of the park. He's just doing some research on this island that's being funded by Jurassic World headquarters. He doesn't really fully believe in the research they want him to do, but at the same time, he needs their funding.

Is he sceptical about Jurassic World?

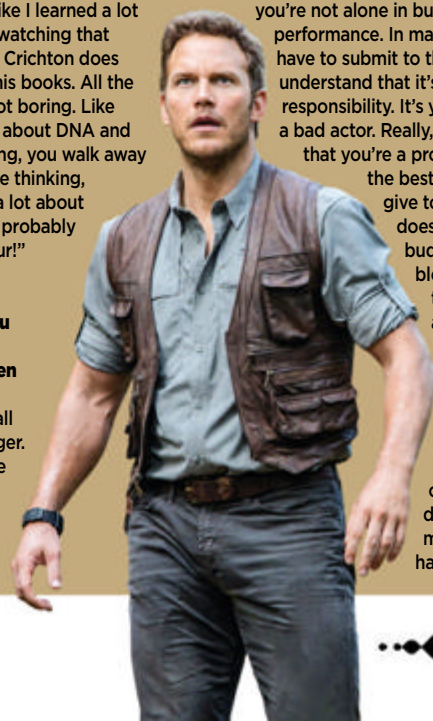
☞ Yeah, he's a little bit of an Ian Malcolm. He has a strong understanding of our precarious position in the natural order of things as human beings. He is sceptical of trying to manipulate nature for our own entertainment. But he's interested in these animals because, well, they're dinosaurs, and he gets to work with them.

Did you do any prep talking to guys who work with dangerous animals?

☞ I did, yeah. That was a jumping off point. I was trying to figure out what animal would be closest to a Raptor. Obviously no one will ever know because we're not going to ever animate Raptors – for god's sake, if you have the thought, just watch *Jurassic Park*, it's not a good idea! – but I sort of zeroed in on dolphins and grizzly bears, because they're both problem solvers. I worked with a guy named Randy Miller at Predators In Action. He trains tigers and grizzly bears for film, and he really helped me zero in on how you treat an animal that's a problem solver; the training techniques that work best with that type of animal.

After *Guardians*, working with co-stars that aren't there must be old hat?

☞ Yeah. It's a skill I guess you can polish, but it's really not all that different from acting with somebody that is there. I think the biggest thing you learn is that you're not alone in building a performance. In many ways, you have to submit to the process and understand that it's not just your responsibility. It's your job to not be a bad actor. Really, "Understand that you're a prop sometimes" is the best advice you can give to an actor who does these big budget production blockbuster-type things. There are also moments where you're going to breathe your own spirit and life into a character, that no one else can ever do, and it's those moments you have to act.



scaly hell in the original movie, we were in true change-the-future-of-cinema territory. How could Trevorrow ever hope to emulate that wow factor when the entire world believes a raccoon can talk?

"The way we did it is we kind of made the movie about that," Trevorrow explains. "One of the first lines you hear is, 'No one's impressed by a dinosaur anymore.' In context of the world we're living in, that's the case of the park, people have been coming here for a while. They've seen this before and their question is, 'What have you got for us next?' So the corporation decides that they're going to create something bigger and badder with more teeth [more on that later...], hoping that people will be endlessly entertained by them just upping the ante. That's kind of what we do with movies. We felt we should face the movie's biggest hurdle head on. I hope when people watch the movie they'll realise that there is plenty of reason to be in awe and to be thrilled."



BIGGER AND BETTER

The dinosaurs themselves will be a mix of familiar faces like the T-rex and Velociraptors, and newcomers. There's Trevorrow's favourite dino, the club-tailed, armoured Ankylosaurus, "which has a great action sequence"; the Dimorphodon, "a new kind of flying reptile that has the head of a Raptor with wings, and is just nasty"; and the series' first water-dwelling dino – the Mosasaurus seen leaping out of a SeaWorld-like attraction to swallow a great white shark whole in the trailer. "There's been an evolution in the way the park has been getting DNA, and they aren't totally reliant on mosquitoes anymore. There's iron in the blood and bones that's preserved the DNA – it's a technology where we're right on the cusp of potentially finding some really amazing finds at the moment. It allowed us to expand the breadth of what dinosaurs we could use without having to answer the question, 'How the hell does a mosquito bite an underwater reptile?'"

But the biggest, baddest resident of Jurassic World has never walked on planet Earth. The Indominus Rex is a bespoke genetic construct designed for the theme park, and its creation has proved somewhat controversial in the blogosphere.

"To me it was about corporate excess," says Trevorrow. "The movie's about excess in general, our lack of humility and our ability to remake our mistakes when there's money on the table. The Indominus Rex came from an idea that Steven had long before I was involved. He just wanted a very vicious dinosaur that broke loose and was threatening the park."

"In the draft that I read," Trevorrow continues, "it was claimed that they found a new dinosaur. It was presented as if it was a real dinosaur, but it wasn't. That actually broke a rule for me – *Jurassic Park* was always based on real palaeontology, they didn't just make up dinosaurs. They may have adjusted the



look of some of them, but they didn't create them out of whole new cloth. So I felt like the only way to have something that was a new dinosaur was if we made the fact that we created it part of the story.

"A hybrid animal is something that we're really familiar with," he goes on. "Lots of people have dogs that have been cross-bred. And not only did Michael Crichton talk about it in the books, but all of the dinosaurs were hybrid. They *all* had frog DNA in them. To

me it didn't feel like as much of a leap as it did to – at least on their initial reaction – some of the fans."

As you'll have seen in the trailers, the I-Rex is rather more formidable than its tiny-armed cousin the T-Rex. It hunts for sport, and even gets its dino brethren communicating with each other. "It allows us to take a bunch of attributes from a bunch of different dinosaurs, and that's our big new sci-fi purchase that we're asking people to buy," Trevorrow admits. ➔

"I hope when people watch the movie they'll realise that there is plenty of reason to be in awe and to be thrilled"

THE BRYCE IS RIGHT

Bryce Dallas Howard is the woman at the helm of Jurassic World



How does your character, Claire Dearing, fit into *Jurassic World*?

☞ She basically runs the park. Where we start with this film, it's John Hammond's dream come to life. It's a fully functional operational park that is working. Her responsibility is to make sure that basically the first film doesn't happen and to keep up with the times and to have it be profitable and all of that. She's sort of Holly Hunter-esque from *Broadcast News*. She's Type A and not entirely self aware, but has moments of clarity, for sure, and is kind of funny, though it's at her expense. She has a lot of gravitas and power and drive and her humanity emerges in unexpected moments. She's a really multi-dimensional, layered, complex lady that gets to be part of this spectacle.

What's Claire's relationship with Owen like?

☞ The way Chris and I talked about it was *Romancing The Stone*. It's a little like that. We also reference *It Happened One Night* and those '40s classic bantery character dynamics where it's two people from two different perspectives and two different walks of life who need to team up together. It starts off with tension, then turns into romantic tension, and then they ultimately become a team. It was so fun to play. It just felt so classic. There were lots of opportunities for humour. My gosh, it was Chris Pratt! It was a blast.

Did you have to do any homework on dinosaurs?

☞ Listen, I have an eight-year-old son, so dinosaurs are part of our day-to-day life! The funny part is, always in reading books to him and whatnot, I'm just terrible in the pronunciation of these dinosaur names. He, from a very young age, was always correcting me. So finally I felt in a way I've been preparing for this the last six years of my life reading dinosaur books to my son.

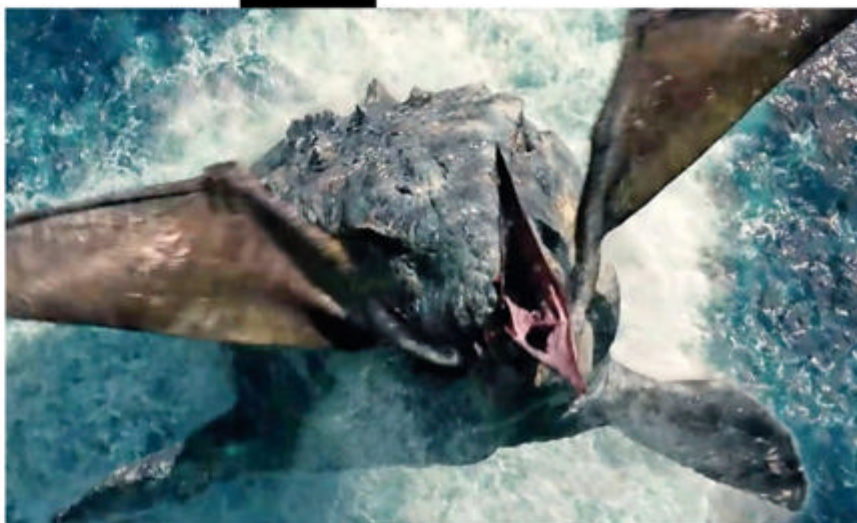
He must have been so impressed you were going to work with dinosaurs.

☞ Oh my gosh, it was very exciting for both my children, but it has certainly been the source of some nightmares for my daughter, where she's like, "I don't want any dinosaurs to come into my room tonight!" At the beginning, you got a kick out of saying, "I'm working with dinosaurs." And then I think my daughter took that too seriously, and now I'm trying to undo that trauma [laughs].

You can do it! Fly, little bird, fly!



Aren't you guys standing a little close to those bars?



"It's every bit as much of a leap as resurrecting dinosaurs in the first place – which is a fantasy idea that has slowly crept closer and closer to reality as the years have gone by."

One recent scientific development we won't be seeing in *Jurassic World*, however, is the now commonly accepted theory that many dinosaurs had feathers.

"Steven tried having dinosaurs with feathers in his TV show, *Terra Nova*, and it didn't satisfy him emotionally," explains Trevorrow. "To me, it also didn't necessarily fit with the canon, because the book made very clear that these dinosaurs were already different from what they could look like. We use a bit of dialogue in *Jurassic World* from the first book where Dr Wu [a returning BD Wong] says, 'If the genetic code were pure, a lot of them would look quite different. But that's not what you asked for. You asked for more teeth.'"



THE NEW BATCH

Where the previous sequels brought back at least one of the original movie's stars, *Jurassic World* goes for a roster of newbies – aside from genetics genius Wu, who had a tiny role in *Jurassic Park*, and whose fate was left unexplained. "His fame has turned him into someone whose ambitions have gone far beyond what is safe or wise," says Trevorrow.

"It's not necessarily about bringing the characters back," he continues. "I think when you go back to your old school and you see your old classroom or touch the railings, that is very sentimental and warm. When you see your old teacher, sometimes they can make you very sad and make you feel like you're on a slow march towards death [laughs] and then internalise your own ageing process. Though all the actors from the first film look fantastic," he laughs. "That's not my point!"

The human dino-fodder this time out includes Vincent D'Onofrio's security chief Vic Hoskins, Bryce Dallas Howard's park manager Claire Dearing, and Hollywood's man of the moment, Chris Pratt, in the lead role of dinosaur expert Owen Grady.

"He wasn't Star-Lord when we cast him, and I didn't see *Guardians Of The Galaxy* until the last week of production, after Pratt had already left the shoot, so it literally couldn't have anything to do with the casting," says Trevorrow. "But I knew that Chris, having met him, had all of the pieces to be the character. He was a great hero and certainly is great looking and funny and can emote and be part of a romantic pairing. But the one thing that really sold me on the

Nope, we can't see the Indiana Jones thing at all.



WIN!

A complete set of Lego Jurassic World up for grabs

It's not just the computer geniuses at ILM who get to create scenes from *Jurassic World*, you know. Lego's new *Jurassic World* range features characters and dinosaurs from the movie, and we have a full set* to give away.

To stand a chance of winning, head to www.futurecompetitions.com/jurassiclego and answer this question:

Which character caused the computer systems to shut down in the original *Jurassic Park*?

- a. Dennis Nedry
- b. John Hammond
- c. Donald Gennaro

Competition is open from Wednesday 27 May until midnight on Tuesday 23 June 2015.

For terms and conditions, see www.futurecompetitions.com/jurassiclego.

idea was I knew that this character had to be the type of person who could have a kind of relationship with animals that most people on the planet could not. I watched this video of a guy in Africa who was able to lie in a field of lions and cuddle with them like they were cats. He was very much like Chris Pratt. I felt like, "That's a vicious predator animal whisperer and I buy this."

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They came to see dinosaurs, they got to see dinosaurs. What are they complaining about?

Despite the reptiles at his disposal – and the fact that *Jurassic World* has some 20,000 visitors – Trevorrow insists that making us believe in these characters is key.

"What we're going to care about most are the lives of the people we know. You can raise the numbers and have chaotic dinosaur attacks on large crowds of people, but even those sequences boil down to how the characters we know are operating within the context of that giant attack. I think once you've seen mass destruction without characters once, it's hard to watch it again. We don't really leave those characters. We have this all happen around them.

"In the end, this movie boils down to a group of people we hopefully love, and a couple of dinosaurs – and that's it."

***Jurassic World* opens on Thursday 11 June.**

* PICTURES SHOWN DO NOT REPRESENT ENTIRE RANGE.

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P R E S E N T

GEORGE LUCAS

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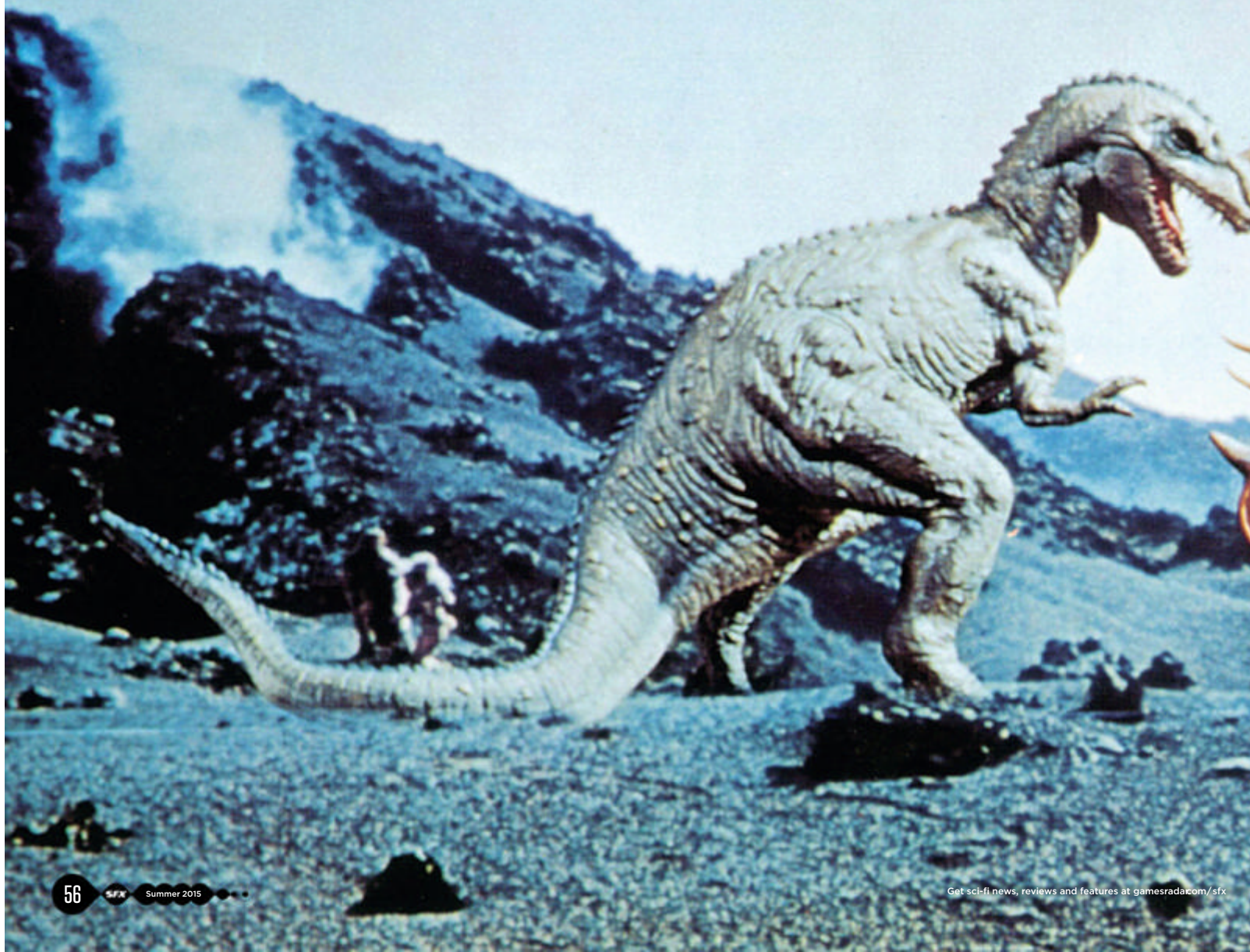
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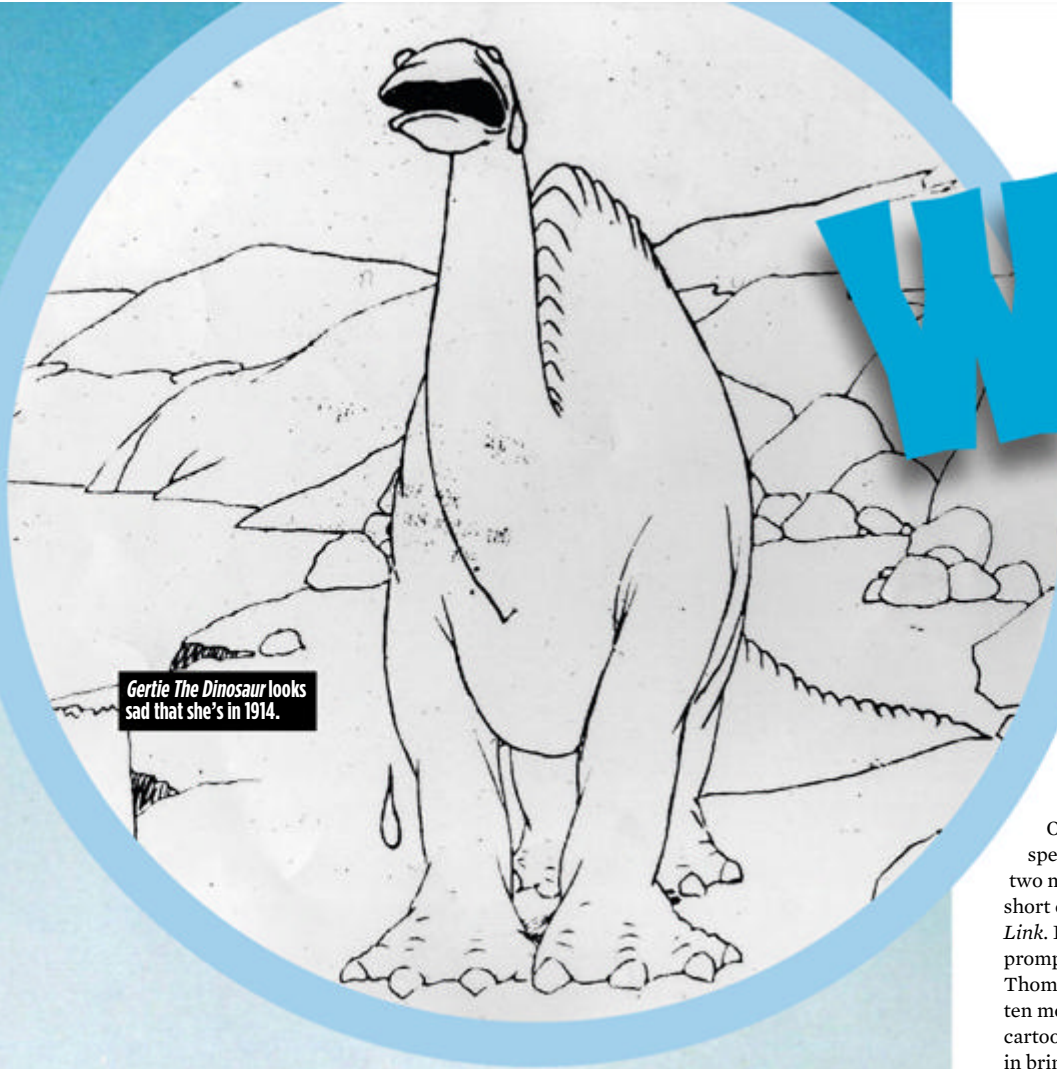
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WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH

WITH *JURASSIC WORLD* ABOUT TO OPEN, LUKE DORMEHL TRACES THE
HISTORY OF DINOSAURS RAMPAGING ACROSS THE BIG SCREEN





Gertie The Dinosaur looks sad that she's in 1914.

WHEN THE ORIGINAL

Jurassic Park lurched, snorted, clawed and roared its way onto cinema screens in 1993, it came with a tagline proclaiming it to be an “adventure 65 million years in the making”. That may have been classic Hollywood hyperbole, but it’s certainly fair to say that dinosaurs have had a big part to play in the movies. With *Jurassic World* about to arrive in multiplexes, we thought the time was right to dig through some of that ancient history, searching for cinematic fossils...

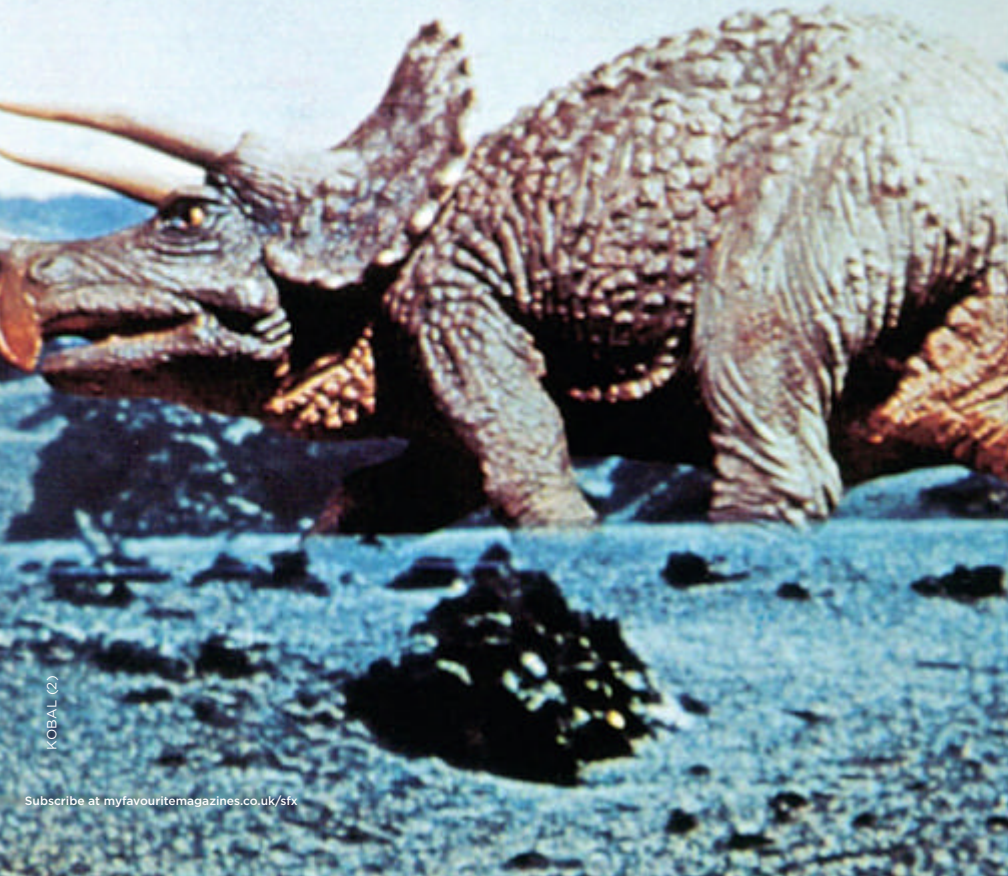
Just as any history of real-life dinosaurs has to begin with the Triassic period, any true rundown of dinosaur movies must start with Willis O’Brien. With his pioneering use of stop-motion photography, O’Brien helped invent the modern special effects industry. In 1915, he spent two months piecing together a five-minute short called *The Dinosaur And The Missing Link*. It attracted interested audiences, which prompted inventor-cum-film distributor Thomas Edison to give him the funding for ten more films. A genre was born (though cartoonist Winsor McCay just pipped him in bringing a prehistoric beast to the screen, creating charming animated short *Gertie The Dinosaur* the year before).

A significant entry in O’Brien’s filmography is 1925’s *The Lost World*, based on the superb 1912 book by Sherlock Holmes author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. His crowning achievement, however, was on the 1933 movie *King Kong*, which boasts a lengthy, athletic and surprisingly brutal battle between the titular ape and a *Tyrannosaurus Rex*, ending with the grisly death of the latter.

Things remained quiet on the dino front in the 1940s, although the decade after made up for it, with what can only be described as a dinosaur golden age. By the 1950s, Willis O’Brien had been joined by a protégé – and eventual successor – named Ray Harryhausen. Some of Harryhausen’s best-loved work was on 1953’s wonderful *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*. Telling the story of a dinosaur awoken from its slumber by nuclear testing, the movie features plenty of fine scenes showing the fictitious *Rhedosaurus* rampaging through American landmarks.

The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms “inspired” plenty of films: two of which (*Gorgo* and *The Giant Behemoth*) were British knockoffs about more polite dinosaurs bothering people at places like Battersea Park, while scientists protest as if they’re bemoaning the weather.

This period of dinosaur cinema is easy to romanticise, but not everything it produced was great. Particularly sad is *King Dinosaur*, the 1955 debut of Bert I Gordon, a monster movie director whose initials appropriately spelled out Mister BIG. At a feeble 63 minutes, the film attempts to tell the story of four ➔



WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH

WHERE'S GODZILLA?



✦ First appearing in the 1954 film of the same name, Godzilla is the King of the Monsters. But is he a dinosaur? "Godzilla's ability to breathe radioactive death breath takes him into the realm of pure fantasy, not to mention the fact that the emphasis on Godzilla's prehistoric origins for the most part faded quickly after the first couple of films," says *The Dinosaur Filmography's* Mark Berry. There are, of course, a few more realistic dinosaurs in Godzilla movies, such as "Titanosaurus" in *Terror Of Mechagodzilla* and the "Gojirasaurus" in *Godzilla Vs King Ghidorah*. But those are a separate story.

astronauts in the futuristic year 1960 who travel to a new planet, which has just entered Earth's solar system. They briefly consider its suitability for colonisation, before finding that dinosaurs have had much the same idea. Like any self-respecting scientist making the discovery of a lifetime, they blow the planet up with an atom bomb, killing all inhabitants.

"It's astounding how much bad-movie gold this movie contains," Mark Berry, author of the authoritative tome, *The Dinosaur Filmography*, tells *SFX*. "It all culminates in a final reel showdown between our four intrepid astronauts and the titular King Dinosaur, which is a Tyrannosaurus Rex portrayed by what must have been the most ragged, pitiful-looking iguana that was living on Earth in 1955." The scene in which the filmmakers attached monofilament lines to "allow" the creature to stand on its hind legs to tower over its human victims must be seen to be believed.

LOST AND FOUND

Dinosaur fans didn't have to wait long for their next burst of superb big budget dino action, though, thanks to a 1960 remake of *The Lost World*, directed by Irwin Allen (reviewed on page 102). The film was a hit, although it's not a patch on the 1925 silent version. Berry coined the term "Irwinosaurus" for the film's unfortunate innovation of attaching horns, sails and a variety of other appendages to live lizards, so that they could play the starring role.



A break from the furry fella in Peter Jackson's *King Kong*.



Special effects not bettered for years in the original *King Kong*.

the very enjoyable *When Dinosaurs Ruled The Earth*, which set a new standard for stopmotion, and was based on a treatment by celebrated author JG Ballard. His name was misspelled in the credits. The film was made by Hammer, best known for their *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* movies.

"Curious to see how the British film world worked, I turned up at the Wardour Street offices of Hammer, to be greeted in the foyer by [a poster showing] a huge Tyrannosaurus Rex about to deflower a blonde-haired actress in a leopard-skin bikini," Ballard recalled in his autobiography. As is often the case with low-budget movies, the poster was finished before the script was written.

Seventies dino movies went downhill from there, with the nadir being *The Crater Lake Monster*, about a giant rubber plesiosaur going mad in Northern California. It arrived in cinemas the same year

The Lost World triggered several more dino movies, including 1966's *One Million Years BC*, which proved especially terrifying to the underdressed cast of cavemen because it shot in the Canary Islands during the middle of winter. The image of Raquel Welch in a fur bikini proved more enduring than her out-of-time prehistoric co-stars. There was also 1969's *The Valley Of Gwangi*, which wins the tantalising poster award with the strapline: "Cowboys Battle Monsters In The Lost World Of Forbidden Valley".

Interest in monster movies was on the decline by the time *The Valley Of Gwangi* was released, but the following year still managed



The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms after its rise to the surface.

DINO SCIENCE!



✦ You'd be forgiven for thinking of dino films as escapist fantasy. But that's not always the case. "What's interesting to me is the way that some dinosaur films actually anticipated the changes in scientific thinking," says Mark Berry. "Theories about warm-blooded dinosaurs with tails in the air were far away in 1925 when Willis O'Brien gave us athletic dinosaurs in *The Lost World*. He even had his meat-eater leap to snatch a flying pterosaur!" In the years since, dinosaur movies have given us sharp portrayals of dinosaurs as they could have been. Even if the ones in *Jurassic World* don't have feathers.



The day the cowboys met the dinos in 1969's *The Valley Of Gwangi*.



The film that reawakened dinosaurs: Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*.



Roger Corman cashes in with *Carnosaur*.



The Lost World from 1960 had worse special effects than the 1925 version!



Hammer's *When Dinosaurs Ruled The Earth* mixed sexiness with kiddyness.

as *Star Wars*, *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* and *Smokey And The Bandit*. If this was the best dino movies could manage, maybe they deserved to go extinct!

Fortunately, science stepped in to save us, both on and off the screen. From the 1980s onwards, a new focus on fields like genetic modification provided a quasi-believable explanation for how dinosaurs could conceivably come back – without leaning on hitherto lost islands or the world's worst case of oversleeping. The '90s was also the decade in which the stopmotion of Willis O'Brien and Ray Harryhausen gave way to computer generated special effects.

The most obvious meeting point between these two ideas was, of course, 1993's *Jurassic*

Park, which rampaged on to become the highest-grossing movie of all time until it was overtaken by *Titanic*. Although this was Spielberg's first proper crack at a dinosaur movie, his love of the genre was clearly evident. In both his 1971 debut *Duel* and his 1975 mega-hit *Jaws* the sound of a dinosaur roar can be heard in the climactic scene. Spielberg explained it by saying the films were about "leviathans targeting everyman" – dinosaur movies by any other name.

Further down the food chain, we got Roger Corman's *Carnosaur*. Released weeks before *Jurassic Park*, *Carnosaur* is *Jurassic Park* on a shoestring. It tells the story of a mad scientist (are there any other sort in a Corman movie?) who decides to destroy the world by bringing dinosaurs back from the dead with genetic engineering. The dinosaur effects are bargain basement and the plot virtually non-existent, although that wasn't enough to stop Corman from making two more movies in what became, terrifyingly, a *Carnosaur* "franchise". Not to be denied a chance to wring out every last penny from his \$850,000 *Carnosaur*, Corman later allowed footage from the movie to be reused in 2001's *Raptor* and 2006's *The Eden Formula* – or *Tyrannosaurus Wrecks*.

BIG AND SMALL

On the big-budget end of the spectrum there were two *Jurassic Park* sequels (one acceptable, one less so), and a lengthy section of Peter Jackson's 2005 *King Kong*, which doesn't hold a candle to Willis O'Brien's original, for all its bleeding-edge effects. There was also a good scene in *Night At The Museum*, 2009's *Ice Age: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs*, and Michael Bay's *Transformers: Age Of Extinction*, which introduced Dinobots to the live-action franchise. All of these pictures tapped into the rise of CGI to produce effects that would have seemed unimaginable in an earlier age.

But the most unlikely dino-feature in the past few decades has to be Terrence Malick's 2011 *The Tree Of Life*, a philosophical ode to the nature of existence that just so happens to include a lengthy dinosaur setpiece.

Aside from these scattered examples, though, most of the contemporary dino-flicks have been in B-movies, or, increasingly, in made-for-TV movies aired on America's Syfy network. In a logical advance from *Jurassic Park*'s genetic engineering plotline, these films now focus on straight-up species hybrids, as even madder scientists (read: inspiration-starved studio execs) appear to throw darts at a board to see what crazy new crossover they can come up with. The first movies in this series were the likes of *Dinocroc*, *Dinoshark* and, later, the very silly indeed *Sharktopus Vs Pteracuda*: the latter a half-pterodactyl, half-barracuda.

"These movies are tongue-in-cheek, but they come from a genuine place," says Kevin O'Neill, who directed all three. "I got into this business purely because of Willis O'Brien. Where I grew up on Long Island, TV networks used to broadcast movies like *King Kong* for six days in a row. I watched it and just fell in love. That started a lifelong obsession with special effects – and with dinosaur movies."

Given *Jurassic Park*'s towering position among dinosaur movies, all eyes are on *Jurassic World* to spur on the next great wave of dino movies. But however the film is received, this brief history should be enough to prove that the genre will keep going regardless. To paraphrase Jeff Goldblum's Dr Ian Malcolm from the first *Jurassic Park*: when it comes to the continuation of dinosaur movies, life finds a way... **SFX**

**"THE T-REX IS
PORTRAYED BY
THE MOST
RAGGED, PITIFUL-
LOOKING IGUANA"**

THE FUTURE OF THE FORCE

 THE STAR WARS UNIVERSE IS EXPANDING RAPIDLY. JOSEPH McCABE GIVES US THE LATEST ON TWO MOVIES, ONE TV SERIES AND A VIDEOGAME

Few weekends in recent memory have been as seismic for *Star Wars* fans as that of 16-19 April, which saw the Force awaken in Anaheim, California, for *Star Wars* Celebration 2015. It gave us an explosion of news from that galaxy far, far away – as well as director JJ Abrams and the cast of *Episode VII* uniting for the first time since completing principal photography on the latest film in the Skywalker saga, the first since 1983 to feature the original trilogy's cast. *SFX* was there to witness the Force-fuelled madness. Here's what we learned...

STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

Abrams, a longtime *Star Wars* devotee who'd attended past *Star Wars* Celebrations as a fan, seeks, like Luke Skywalker before him, to return hope to the galaxy he loves. "It had such heart," says the filmmaker of his impressions upon first watching the original *Star Wars*. "And the biggest thing for me is it had so much hope. That to me was incredibly powerful. Even at 11 years old."

The director and co-writer (with Lawrence Kasdan) of *The Force Awakens* is also keen to reintroduce the practical sets and "that feeling of actually being in [it] – whether they were shooting in Tunisia or on various physical, tangible sets. It's *Star Wars*, [so] there are gonna be an endless number of effects that are done CG of course. But we needed a standard and we needed to set a standard that was real.

That felt like you knew the people were in those places. The way the light interacts with the set, you want it to be legitimate. You want it to be authentic. So building as much as we possibly could was really the mandate."

One of the new planets introduced in the film brought the production to the desert of Abu Dhabi. "It was an incredible thing to shoot there," says Abrams. "It was 128 degrees... *Star Wars* is as much a Western fairytale as anything else, and one of the things you expect and want to see are real, tangible, John Ford beautiful landscapes. Shooting in Abu Dhabi provided just that. The location is a desert planet called Jakku. People have thought it's Tatooine."

Fans Oliver Steeples and Lee Towersey were hired by Abrams as droid mechanics and tasked with designing new R2 units after

executive producer (and Lucasfilm President) Kathleen Kennedy saw their work at Celebration Europe II, in Essen, Germany. "Every day we went to work with a smile on our face," Lee told the crowds at *The Force Awakens* presentation. "It was brilliant... JJ gave the request for some new [droid] domes. So we created a new dome that JJ was happy with." That dome, the RO, was modified into the white ROLO dome – the LO for Lee and Oliver. "There was never a costly droid delay," laughed Abrams, "so we were very grateful."

The Force Awakens' biggest scene-stealer is BB-8, best known as the "Ball Droid". "We talked originally about how to best have BB-8 in the film," explains Abrams. "And there were a lot of discussions about how having a CG ➔



**"IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE THING
TO SHOOT IN ABU DHABI.
IT WAS 128 DEGREES..."**

Daisy Ridley is upwardly
mobile as Rey.



How fantastic is it to see Mark
Hamill and Carrie Fisher reunited?

She's got it where
it counts, kid.

Read our full analysis of The Force Awakens trailer at bit.ly/TFABreakdown

Stormtroopers: this year's model.



Those TIE Fighters still can't hit the Falcon...



Note the very familiar background decor.

John Boyega as conflicted Stormtrooper Finn.

BB-8 would be so much easier for shooting. But we also knew it would be better for the film, for the actors, for the sets, for the look of it, if it were performed. And [effects artist] Neal Scanlan and his unbelievable team built and puppeteered BB-8 in the movie. It was better for the actors, it was better for the film itself."

The Force Awakens' new human leads Daisy Ridley, John Boyega and Oscar Isaac introduced their characters at Celebration – the brave Rey, out-of-his-element stormtrooper Finn, and brash Poe Dameron (possibly an attempt to replicate the Leia-Luke-Han triangle). "We discover Rey on the desert planet Jakku," says Ridley. "She is a scavenger in a ship graveyard, and she is

completely self-sufficient and very solitary. Until she meets another character [Finn], and an adventure begins." Finn, adds Boyega – a huge *Star Wars* fan who got Harrison Ford to sign a Han Solo action figure on set – "is in incredible danger. The way he decides to react to this danger changes his life, and launches him into the *Star Wars* Universe in a very unique way." Isaac, meanwhile, says Poe is "the best freakin' pilot in the galaxy. He's been sent on a mission by a certain princess, and he ends up coming across Mr John Boyega's character, and their fates are forever intertwined."

Abrams stresses his intent to recapture the weathered look of the first three *Star Wars* films. "One of the things I loved so much about the original trilogy was that sense of everything being lived in and used. It was a world of underdogs and you just felt like you were fighting against an enemy that was bigger and larger... The look and the feel of that technology – being anything but pristine, anything but brand new – was really important. There needs to be a contrast. The amazing aesthetic, again, the brilliance of what George did, the contrast between the gleaming Empire and the dusty Cantina. We're very much following that feeling. This movie takes place decades after *Jedi*. So this film needs to follow suit."

According to Carrie Fisher – who appeared on stage alongside original stars Anthony

Daniels, Peter Mayhew and Mark Hamill – Princess Leia will once more have a new 'do. "The buns are retired now. So we're probably not gonna have the futuristic buns. But I think we have an alternate thing you'll be very into. Which is not the metal bikini, I promise." As for the presence of other females in the expanding *Star Wars* Universe, Fisher says, "I liked being the only one when I was 19 and that was possible. But now I need some backup."

Perhaps as a response to many fans' belief that their feelings were ignored by George Lucas throughout production of the prequel trilogy, Kennedy declares, "I don't think there's anything more important in the *Star Wars* Universe than the fans. That generational experience is really important, and it's everything in terms of the future of *Star Wars*. You guys energise us, so thank you." Isaac mentioned his own experience as a fan helped him overcome his nervousness in accepting his role, winning huge laughs when he explained how he cranked up the *Star Wars* theme, grabbed a shampoo bottle, and pretended it was a lightsaber in order to feel the Force once more.

"THERE'S NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT IN THE *STAR WARS* UNIVERSE THAN THE FANS"

STAR WARS ROGUE ONE

The *Star Wars* spin-off films will be called the *Star Wars* Anthology Series, as announced on the final day of Celebration 2015 by Kathleen Kennedy and Gareth Edwards, the director of the first Anthology film – *Star Wars: Rogue One*. The two appeared to explain the premise behind *Rogue One*, and show some brief teaser footage, in which a newly constructed Death Star loomed ominously over a rocky tree-lined planet while the voice of Alec Guinness' Obi-Wan Kenobi in *A New Hope* explained the rise of the Empire.

StarWars.com's Pablo Hidalgo moderated the conversation with Kennedy and Edwards, and gave the official description of *Rogue One*: "A rogue band of resistance fighters united for a daring mission to steal the Death Star plans and bring new hope to the galaxy." Taking place between the fall of the Jedi in *Revenge Of The Sith* and the *New Hope* of Luke Skywalker, *Rogue One* features a galaxy whose fate is determined by "a group of heroes who don't have magical powers".

The idea for *Rogue One* comes from Industrial Light & Magic's chief creative officer John Knoll, who brought it to Kennedy after she became Lucasfilm's president. According to Edwards, the film will examine the grey area left unexplored thus far in the *Star Wars* saga, with its darker-than-night villains and sunshine-bright heroes, emphasised by concept art depicting spacecraft landing at night and soldiers tromping through mud.

Felicity Jones, to date the only actor confirmed for the film, will play a rebel soldier. She'll find herself in a war movie skewed towards an audience older than that which usually turns out for *Star Wars*. One inspired by films like *Black Hawk Down* and *Saving Private Ryan*, as opposed to the 1930s cinema that influenced Lucas's original vision. But, as Edwards observes, "It's called *Star... Wars*."

Rogue One will shoot this summer, for a December 2016 release. "We'll be shooting around the world," says Edwards, "in locations I don't want to say because I'm worried 3,000 will turn up." The director took his own pilgrimage on his 30th birthday, as he showed the Celebration attendees photos of his trip to Tunisia, the location of Luke Skywalker's boyhood farm home on Tatooine.



STAR WARS REBELS

Star Wars Rebels' season one finale revealed not only a 30-year-old Ahsoka Tano aiding the show's heroes, but none other than Darth Vader himself poised to make their lives miserable in season two – voiced by the one and only James Earl Jones. "We're not encumbered by what [Darth Vader's] suit's limitations were," says *Rebels* co-creator Dave Filoni. "He could be faster and quicker if we wanted him to be. But we absolutely did not go that way. If you watch the trailer, you can see that Keith Kellogg and the animation team did a meticulous job of studying his fighting style, so that it's very true to the stature and the power Vader has. He's just a mountain of fear and hate and power, and that's what we try to throw at Kanan and Ezra."

Expect to learn a great deal more about the background of *Rebels*' heroes in the expanded year two. "We will be addressing Ezra's parents, to some degree. Now that he has this other family, what happened to his mom and dad? The nice thing about season two is that you get a broader look at all the characters. It's not just Sabine and what her background is, but also Hera and Zeb, Ezra, Kanan. You even eventually get more of an in-depth backstory on Chopper and where Chopper's from."

Filoni refers to *Rebels*' second season as "our *Empire Strikes Back* era for our characters... The story gets bigger, the stakes get higher, where they're really challenged. The first year is kind of *A New Hope*." "The way we approached season two," adds co-creator Simon Kinberg, "was [with] new challenges to the family from the outside. Now that they are essentially a unit – a family – how do they continue to grow individually and how do they stay together as each of them is facing new challenges?"



Newbies John Boyega, Daisy Ridley and Oscar Isaac.

New lightsaber: want want want.



Hope that's not a giant space worm...



As for what happened to the Rebel Alliance and the Empire, they've evolved into "The Resistance" and "The First Order" (as revealed in the descriptions of props on display at Celebration Anaheim). While the Resistance symbol may be the same as that used by the Alliance (an identical one is featured on Poe's X-wing helmet), the First Order's insignia is a good deal spikier than Palpatine's.

Some new character names have also been announced: Gwendoline Christie is playing chrome-armoured First Order officer Captain Phasma while Adam Driver is black-clad Kylo Ren. Lupita Nyong'o, meanwhile, is mo-capping the piratical Maz Kanata, rumoured to be a collector of Jedi and Sith artefacts. She has her own castle, complete with a horde of prosthetic creatures...



Gareth Edwards: man with great responsibility.

"REBELS CLASH WITH THE EMPIRE IN LAND AND AIR COMBAT"

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT

Though many a *Star Wars* videogame has come and gone since we first visited that galaxy far, far away, none have made as jaw-dropping a debut as EA DICE's *Star Wars: Battlefront*, due out in November for PlayStation 4, Xbox One and PC (sorry, Xbox 360 and PS3 fans). Gameplay details debuted on the second day of Celebration 2015, along with the game's second trailer, which featured each of the four worlds it allows players to explore: Endor, Tatooine, Hoth and Sullust.

In *Star Wars: Battlefront*, Rebels clash with the Empire in land and air combat. Though the game will not feature battles in space, the Millennium Falcon, TIE fighters and X-wing fighters will be present, as well as speeder

bikes, jetpacks, and AT-AT and AT-ST walkers. Vader and Boba Fett were confirmed to appear.

The first downloadable content from *Star Wars: Battlefront* is, fittingly, taken from *The Force Awakens* — the "Battle of Jakku", which took place shortly after the Battle of Endor and is presumably the reason for all those trashed spaceships in the new movie's trailer. Available for download on 8 December 2015 (and on 1 December for those who pre-order *Battlefront*), it will include two maps set on the titular planet and take place before the events of *The Force Awakens*.

In its effort to ensure accuracy, the EA DICE team not only visited Skywalker Ranch to shoot photos of *Star Wars* vehicles and props in the Lucasfilm Archives, but visited shooting locations as well, including Death Valley, the California redwood forests, and Finse in Norway (better known as Hoth). 



Place your bets...

Make a plan and stick to it.

Are you equal to Ewoks' cunning and guile?



Hoth's always such a lively place to visit.

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BACK TO THE FUTURE

"IT'S COOL
TO PAY
HOMAGE TO
SOMETHING
PEOPLE
LOVE"

The Terminator franchise gets a full system reset in Terminator Genisys. Richard Jordan meets the stars of the saga's brand new model



T HINK OF SCI-FI'S

most memorable onscreen couples and chances are Kyle Reese and Sarah Connor are somewhere near the top of your

list. *The Terminator* made stars of Michael Biehn and Linda Hamilton, and their battle-scarred future-war veteran and big-haired damsel in distress lent James Cameron's robot-assassin thriller some much-needed heart. Which is probably why Reese and Connor are making a return to the series in franchise "reset" *Terminator Genisys*, albeit with new faces – *Divergent*'s Jai Courtney and *Game Of Thrones*' Emilia Clarke – and a drastically changed dynamic. In this new timeline, when Reese travels back to 1984 to save Sarah (mother of resistance leader John) from the T-800 sent to kill her, he finds a very different woman to the one he's expecting...

"In the original you saw Sarah go from a kind of 'no idea what's going on' young girl into the fighter we know from *Terminator 2*, but with our Sarah, you get to see her start as this complete badass," says Clarke, excitedly. "She's got herself together, and that's the joy of seeing Kyle Reese who has no idea, up until the point when he meets her, that she knows what's what – that she's got it all covered."

The reason? This new Sarah has already been groomed for battle with sinister artificial intelligence Skynet by a reprogrammed T-800 (once again played by franchise custodian Arnold Schwarzenegger), sent back even earlier to protect her from a childhood assassination attempt. "Kyle gets sent back to accomplish this mission that the future of mankind rests on... but she doesn't need him there," laughs Courtney. "That was really fun to work on with Emilia. We're this kind

of odd couple and have completely different perspectives on how the mission should play out. To her, he's a total inconvenience."

PAYING HOMAGE

Directed by *Thor: The Dark World*'s Alan Taylor, *Genisys* opens with an almost shot-for-shot recreation of Reese's arrival in 1984 Los Angeles, before the action veers off in a bold new direction. For the filmmakers, it was a chance to nod towards James Cameron's originals while pushing forward with their own story – bypassing the poorly received *Terminator 3* and *Terminator Salvation* in the process... "We're not remaking *The Terminator*," Courtney assures us. "But it's cool to give a little nudge and pay homage to something that people love. That was fun from an actor's perspective, not being bound to it or to feel like that was our bible or anything like that, but to just [show] how it subtly leans into it." Clarke agrees: "Fundamentally, we're taking the original beauty that James Cameron created and putting a different spin on it. The people that you see are exactly the same, but their histories have changed them."

Not that the whole movie is set in the '80s, though. With the original "termination" of Connor thwarted early on via an audacious sequence in which Arnie fights a "younger" (ie fresh off the production line) version of himself, our trio flash-forward to near-future San Francisco to deal with an even greater threat brought about by Skynet's powerful new operating system (the "Genisys" of the title) – one that means a whole new Judgment Day is on the cards. "The villain in our movie is one that you can't see," says Clarke, cryptically, before going on to explain the plot's relevance. "I think the [dominance of technology] is much more of a reality now than it was in 1984. If I'm not with my phone, I feel like I don't have an arm. It's terrible!"

Taking on the mantle of such iconic sci-fi characters isn't without its pitfalls – especially on a franchise with such a large fanbase. So, ➔

"What do you mean, I'm looking my age?"

Guns just aren't as impressive as dragons, we're afraid.

was there any trepidation about stepping into Biehn and Hamilton's shoes? "The mantle of Linda loomed pretty heavy, obviously," admits Clarke. "She was a powerful female icon, so it's a lot of pressure in that sense. But the script that we have is so different, it enabled me a lot more freedom in the role without just playing copycat. The arc that you see with her is that she softens. Because she's been raised by a Terminator, she's pretty steadfast in her practicality, and knowing that she has a mission she has to live up to. And there's no room for emotion in that. Terminators don't have a sense of humour, so it was a pretty dry upbringing for her. But the lovely thing is then being able to find the emotional responses that she wasn't expecting when she meets the characters that she meets in the film."

For Courtney, a self-confessed fan of Cameron's movies, there was no doubt in his mind about joining the *Terminator* universe. "It was *Terminator 2* that had my attention as a kid," he recalls. "I guess I idolised the young John Connor. He's this badass little kid who lives in complete rebellion from his parents. That was probably a fantasy I wanted to play out myself somewhat! So it's totally surreal to now be involved with that. I kind of went on this journey with [A Good Day To] *Die Hard* – being familiar with something many years ago, and then all of a sudden as an adult finding myself part of that. It's a strange coincidence that that's happened twice. But I don't really think of anything beyond that. It was a great opportunity and kind of a no-brainer."

BUILT TO SCALE

Filmed over three months in New Orleans, the shoot itself was suitably epic – with both Clarke and Courtney admitting it was the biggest project either had been involved with to date. "It was tough, man," says Courtney. "It was really tough. It was a long one. We were dealing with something that's incredibly physical and grand in scale, and therefore nothing was a cruise. I don't think our craft should be, anyway. Going down there, I thought: 'Awesome, New Orleans... It's a party town, we're going to have fun down here!' But all that time, and I still haven't had a beer on Bourbon Street! It was more about the long haul – but thankfully we had a great group of people and we were all in it together."

"We filmed in summer, which was insane," Clarke continues. "It was *really* hot, which added to the tension and the grit of the piece. It was definitely a testing shoot because I came into it unaware of just how big the action can be. There's some huge setpieces, and the intensity I felt on set was unlike anything I've ever done. You're in New Orleans, in crazy humidity, firing a grenade launcher... You have earplugs in, because the bangs are so huge and there are a lot of real explosions. I remember

"Get off my lawn!"



"Come with me if you want to live."

so many times, I'd take one out to have a discussion with Alan [Taylor, director] and forget to put the fucker back in – and then I'm half deaf and my ears are ringing for the rest of the day! As an actor, it's not like I do any real manual labour. It's rare you go to bed and feel, 'I really worked today.' So that stuff was trying, but in a very satisfying way."

Courtney, meanwhile – no stranger to action himself after the likes of *Die Hard*, *Jack Reacher* and the *Divergent* series – faced a different type of physical challenge. "I had to strip weight for the movie, and that was a bitch!" says the actor, who, when SFX meets him, has bulked back up to huge proportions to play Aussie antihero Captain Boomerang in David Ayer's upcoming *Suicide Squad*. "It was the first time I'd done proper all-out scientific nutritional programme. There was no guess work any more. It was all down to blood readings and how my system dealt with certain stuff. In order to get in that shape, it was just a tonne of low-impact cardio, which is the most mind-numbing shit you can possibly

do. I spent literally months walking uphill on a treadmill and eating more salmon than I thought possible. But it's cool when you can put your body through something like that and get results and know really what you're capable of. You feel it. The stuff I'm doing at the moment for *Suicide Squad* again, it's a different type of training. But it's good knowing where your limits are and trying to extend them."

Of course, when you're



Arnie's face was superimposed onto a younger bodybuilder.



Korean actor Byung-hun Lee plays the new T-1000.



Jason Clarke's John Connor has some revelations of his own...



working on such a physically demanding, action-heavy film, there's surely no better co-star than former Mr Olympia Arnold Schwarzenegger, right? "Totally, man. He's a legend!" Courtney enthuses. "Did I go back and watch *Pumping Iron* about five times? Absolutely. It's super dope, man. What's fascinating is he's fucking still in shape. I'm sure he's had downtime over the years, but man, he got back there and he trains every day. But I think the bond that we found – the dynamic between Emilia, myself and Arnold's characters – was kind of the most enjoyable part. We exist in this movie for quite a significant period just the three of us together. We have this thing where they're the father/daughter and I'm the boyfriend. It's a very kind of old school idea that we were able to have a lot of playtime developing."

"He's a joker," Clarke reveals of Arnie's on-set presence. "He's very, very funny, and just had this gorgeous ease on set that diffused loads of potentially tense situations that we might have had. He just brought a light-heartedness where it was like, 'Hey guys! It's going to be okay.' It is, because Arnie says so." With her Sarah Connor having grown up with the T-800 and slowly tried to make him more "human", their relationship naturally mirrors that of John and the Terminator in Cameron's

T2 – another nod the filmmakers are hoping will get any sceptical fans back on side. "A young girl being raised by a Terminator, there's going to be a lot of one-sided jokes," she explains. "So her kind of humour has really dried out because of the fact that he doesn't know how to joke. That kind of banter was great to create with Arnie, and so easy as well. Coming from *Game Of Thrones* where everything's much more sparse... For my character, anyway; I mean, Tyrion's bloody hilarious, but Daenerys doesn't crack too many jokes! So it was lovely to have those kind of one-liners and banterous relationships."

EMPIRE BUILDING

Having Arnie back on board should help *Genisys* get the franchise back on track – something the filmmakers and studio are hoping, anyway, with two sequels already in the works (scheduled for 2017 and 2018 respectively). "We're setting up the universe," says Courtney. "I don't think anyone has plans for this to be the last in the *Terminator* world at all. To have Arnold, it really legitimised things for us and got us all very excited about being a part of it. He cares a lot about this story and this property. He isn't just doing this film for the sake of it or because he got paid. He wouldn't have embarked upon this journey if he didn't have faith in the script, in the direction that the producers want to take it. No one's phoning this in. This was definitely one of the toughest films I've worked on, stunt-wise. We're aware of the stakes for everyone involved in having the courage to make another one of these movies. It's pushing the envelope in every different direction..." **SFX**

Terminator Genisys opens on 3 July. Turn over for our interview with Arnie himself.

"TO HAVE ARNOLD REALLY LEGITIMISED THINGS FOR US"

I'LL BE BACK... The different incarnations of Arnie's T-800



The Killing Machine *The Terminator* (1984)

Faction: Skynet
Sent back by Skynet to kill Sarah Connor before she can give birth to resistance leader John, the original T-800 is a machine of few words, taking out her namesakes with zero mercy before being squished in an industrial press.



The Surrogate Dad *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991)

Faction: Humans
Sent back by John Connor to save his 10-year-old self from the liquid-metal T-1000. Reprogrammed to take on more human characteristics and only shoot people below the knees.



The Ticking Bomb *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* (2003)

Faction: Humans
Sent back by the resistance to protect key future soldiers, including John, from the powerful T-X. Fitted with nuclear battery fuel cells, which it uses to finally blow up the "Terminatrix".



The Prototype *Terminator Salvation* (2009)

Faction: Skynet
In post-Judgment Day 2018, a fresh-off-the-production-line T-800 fights a grown-up John Connor in Skynet's labs before being destroyed by fellow cyborg Marcus Wright.



The Old-Man Cyborg *Terminator Genisys* (2015)

Faction: Humans
Sent back by someone (presumably John?) to protect a young Sarah from assassination. Becomes her personal bodyguard, with his organic tissue ageing just like a human's.

Arnold Schwarzenegger

The Austrian Oak is back to reprise his role as the original killing machine...

WORDS BY RICHARD JORDAN • PORTRAIT BY JILL GREENBERG

It's been 31 years since Arnold Schwarzenegger first played cybernetic assassin the T-800 in James Cameron's classic time-travel thriller *The Terminator*. Since then he's battled Predators, travelled to Mars, tussled with Batman and even served as the Governor of California – an achievement he's clearly still immensely proud of, flashing his knuckleduster of a commemorative ring as he leans forward to offer *SFX* a firm but enthusiastic handshake. We're in his adopted home town of Los Angeles to talk *Terminator Genisys* – the fifth instalment in the long-running franchise, billed as something of a series “reset”. This time out, Schwarzenegger's playing an older, more grizzled machine, sent back even further in time to prepare a young Sarah Connor (*Game Of Thrones*' Emilia Clarke) for the oncoming war with Skynet. *SFX* grilled the former Mr Universe about returning to the role that helped to kickstart his Hollywood career.

BIODATA

OCCUPATION: Actor
BORN: 30 July 1947
FROM: Thal, Austria
GREATEST HITS: *Pumping Iron, Conan The Barbarian, The Terminator, Predator, Twins, Total Recall, Terminator 2: Judgment Day, True Lies, The Last Stand*
RANDOM FACT: He has a weightlifting move – the “Arnold press” – named after him.

Did you have any idea back in '84 that the T-800 would become one of your most iconic characters?

▶ No way. I don't think anyone could know. Movie-making is another science. If you knew ahead of time what is successful or not successful, we wouldn't make movies that go in the toilet, right [laughs]? So no. James Cameron and I knew that we had a very unique project, and there was something very powerful there. But I don't think even the studio really knew. When the movie came out, they sold it as a B-movie. They didn't really

go all out with the campaign. And then it had reviews and they used the quotes, because we had great reviews and we were picked as one of the top 10 movies of the year by *Time* magazine. I think they were surprised by that – how the highbrows also liked the movie, and found

“It was important for me to get the same size as I was in the first film”

something interesting, because of the time travel and what the future holds. No one knew that it would be this big, and that the sequel would become the highest grossing movie of the year. We were all surprised.

You didn't do the last *Terminator* movie...

▶ I didn't do *Terminator Salvation* because I was the Governor [of California] at the time. You can't do both. The people would be very upset if they saw me going off for several months because I'm doing a movie. I made it very clear to them that I would not even do one single shot, because it doesn't work. California is the sixth largest economy in the world, so you have your hands full!

What was it about *Genisys* that appealed to you? Why did you want to reprise the character?

▶ The thing with *Terminator* was: how do you rework it in a way so that you don't get narrowed into a tunnel with the rules [of time travel]. Then you have nowhere to go. Or if you go outside, people say, “That's bogus.” So how do you do that? I think they've been very successful with *Star Trek* and with other films like that. They did that and it worked. So when I read the script I saw that it alters the story of the original *Terminator* and when I meet “myself” – as I ask for the clothes, someone says behind me, “You won't need it” [laughs] – that's when all hell breaks loose and the story goes off in a different direction. To me, that was the most attractive thing.

What kind of Terminator are you playing in this movie?

▶ I'm more of the protector that you saw in *Terminator 2* and 3. I become a fatherly figure to Sarah Connor – I've groomed her since she was a child to become this warrior. It's a great role to play. The evolution you'll see is in the visual effects. There are things we've done in this film that we were not able to do in 1991. For instance, the whole recreation of me as the Terminator from 1984... Even now, they're lucky if they get all the frames in before the movie's released, because it is very difficult to do. But they're doing it. I've seen it and I was really blown away.

Was the shoot very physical for you?

▶ Very physical. Even though the Terminator's flesh has aged, the skeleton stays the same. That's why it was important for me to gain 10lbs and to get the same size as I was in the first *Terminator* movie. I have to say, everyone did an incredible job because they really trained hard. For me, it's natural to train hard. But for [the other actors] to come in like that and to bulk up and be that muscular, and Emilia having to do all this weapons training and all that, I have the utmost respect for them for being able to pull it off.

How is *Genisys* relevant to today's audiences?

▶ There's a lot of real stuff in there. The outcome is kind of sci-fi-y and futuristic, but even that day is becoming real. We're all fascinated by machines. *Terminator Genisys* is all about: how can [Skynet] suck the world into buying into their future... It's now becoming so much of a reality, I don't really see it as science fiction! *SFX*

Terminator Genisys opens on 3 July.







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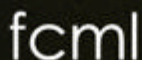
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COUCH POTATO



PHOTOGRAPH BY OLLY CURTIS



1995

With *SFX* celebrating its 20th birthday, the team gather to watch TV and films from the year it all began

Can it really be two decades since *SFX* was unleashed upon an unsuspecting world? Our thickening waists, thinning hair and increasing difficulty remembering what we went to the kitchen for suggest it can (*Speak for yourself! – Dynamic Young Ed*).

It was a very different time. Back then, a troll was something you only encountered playing *D&D*, and a torrent was what resulted when you drank too much lager. Journey with us now, on our sofa-shaped time machine, as we visit those days of yore... and realise that they were, frankly, a bit rubbish.



We preferred Starfleet's earlier work.

Star Trek: Voyager "Parallax"



First stop in stardate 1995: the *Star Trek* franchise, at perhaps its lowest ebb. We

beam in for only the second episode of *Voyager*.

NICK: I don't like this ship design. It looks like a technologically advanced hotel toilet.

Lost in the Delta Quadrant, 70,000 light years from Earth, the USS *Voyager*'s crew have joined forces with a bunch of Maquis freedom fighters. Fascinating conflict is guaranteed, surely?

RICH: The whole point of the two crews was it was meant to be antagonistic, but they just forgot all that after about five episodes.

NICK: They should have had a big dance-off, like that Jason Nevins vs Run-DMC video.

After an argument about realigning

the lateral plasma conduit, an engineer has a broken nose.

IAN: Understandable. I feel like punching someone in the face every time I hear technobabble too.

People discuss whether half-Klingon engineer B'Elanna Torres should be court-martialled.

NICK: It's all about management disputes! What happened to the final frontier?

Incessantly cheery Delta-quadrant local Neelix proposes that they start growing their own food. "I can do some wonderful things with vegetables," he boasts.

IAN: Stick one in your mouth big enough to stop you talking?

NICK: It looks like someone's taken a Stanley knife to his nose. Which is almost understandable.

IAN: He's the sentient equivalent of a novelty tie. ➔



Even Janeway's hair is preferable.

We ponder *Trek*'s first female captain, Kathryn Janeway. And her hair.

NICK: Behold, the bun of power! The sight of Garrett Wang (Ensign Kim) reminds one old lag of an age-old *SFX* office tradition.

IAN: Instead of saying his surname you had to twang a plastic ruler on the side of the desk. I broke two rulers that way.

Everyone cheers as the ship shakes and the cast do their best wobbly-bridge acting. Oh no, they've run into a type four quantum singularity!

JORDAN: Oh good, my favourite type.

Torres proposes remodulating a tractor beam: "It might be enough to cut through the event horizon."

"Surely this scene inspired some lesbian slash fiction?"

IAN: But is it enough to cut through this bullshit dialogue?

Janeway and Maquis second-in-command Chakotay debate the chain of command procedure, and who should be chief engineer.

NICK: Tune in next week to see how they resolve this exciting human resources issue.

We meet the show's best character – the holographic Doctor. In a hilarious comedy subplot, a fault has made him shrink by 10cm.

NICK: They just need to change his aspect ratio. Who's got the remote? "I know my way around an engine room," Torres tells Janeway, pitching for the job as chief.



Rubbish mirror. Money back please.



Crumbs, don't go close to that!

But the captain's not convinced she should "put her in charge down there."

IAN: Surely this scene inspired some lesbian slash fiction? If not, I'm writing it.

The gravimetric force of the singularity is pulling the ship in! Oh no!

IAN: I bet a Maquis engineer solves the problem, leading to a new-found mutual respect.

NICK: It's just like *Diff'rent Strokes*. Voyager are seeing a time-delayed reflection of themselves. They get round this by re-routing the plasma flow, recalibrating the warp particles and deconkulating the fiddledoodoids. Or something. Sorry, to be honest we kinda zoned out.

NICK: So let me get this straight: there are no aliens or spaceships or Orion Slave Girls in this episode, just a spatial anomaly? Good god. "Sometimes you just have to punch your way through," Janeway says.

IAN: Like when you bump into Neelix in the corridor.

"Hull integrity failing!" someone yells.

NICK: Script integrity failing!

The ship escapes, and in a shock twist no one saw coming, the hot-tempered Torres is appointed as chief engineer.

IAN: I can't wait for the episode all about her six-monthly appraisal. Meanwhile, the holographic Doctor is now Diddyman-dimensions, and talking like he's been huffing on helium. Oh, the hilarity.

IAN: Why is his voice squeaky? He doesn't have a larynx!

RICH: Say what you like about *Into Darkness* but it's 20 times better than that.

NICK: That felt like a photocopy of a photocopy of a photocopy of a great idea Gene Roddenberry had in 1964.



Is that a "special" effect...?



The new Clarkson, May and Hammond?



Clearly Great Britain.

Sliders "Prince Of Wails"



Next up, the show which each week "slid" through a wormhole to a different alternate Earth. Cue pumping dance music...

IAN: (throwing shapes) Anyone got any glowsticks?

...climaxing in the show's name being whispered in faintly erotic fashion.

NICK: Sliders... ribbed for your pleasure.

Physics genius Quinn, his female friend Wade, Professor Arturo and soul singer Rembrandt emerge from a rubbish-looking wormhole to...

NICK: An Earth where CGI technology is 20 years behind ours? It's more like one of those *Lost* episodes where they

unconvincingly pretend that Hawaii is London. There's a red double decker! And there's a red phone box! We're in the British States Of America; in this reality, Blighty won the Revolutionary War.

IAN: Oh, a utopia then?

With the King MIA fighting the French, the wicked Sheriff of San Francisco's in charge – and Arturo is his double! The Prof takes advantage of this to blag a car, praising its "British craftsmanship". Cut to: our heroes pushing the car.

IAN: Cheeky sods. At least we've got a functioning sense of irony.

NICK: No one is taking this remotely seriously. Is it time for the dark, gritty reboot?

In the woods, our heroes bump into the King's hapless heir, Prince Harold, foiling the Sheriff's plan to have him assassinated. Then

they're captured by freedom fighters called the Oakland Raiders. "We want our brothers and sisters out of jail!" their leader declares.

IAN: "And accents that sound less Australian, cobber!"

They're taken to the Raiders' dingy HQ. We're soon heartily sick of the sight of it.

JORDAN: Why go to an alternate world and spend the entire episode in a basement?!

RICH: Clearly they could only afford one shot of a red bus.

The Raiders have faxed in their list of demands.

JORDAN: Faxed?! Could this get any more '90s?

IAN: Only if they'd been hand-delivered by Ginger Spice.

Quinn delivers a stirring speech, which ends, "Power to the people!"

NICK: "And freedom for Tooting!" Soon the Prince is hitting on Wade, in best bumbling Hugh Grant fashion.

IAN: Oh good, just what's been missing: a half-hearted romance. Meanwhile, the Sheriff declares martial law.

IAN: I bet no costly extras are allowed on the streets any time after 6pm.

The Raiders storm the state-run TV studio, with surprising ease. As the Prince denounces the Sheriff live on air, Arturo provides the new regime with a familiar-sounding bill of rights – though he decides to "scratch that one" when it comes to the right to bear arms.

IAN: While you're at it, add that colour is spelt with a u, saying "Have a nice day" is annoying, and baseball isn't a proper sport.



So... "pavement" or "sidewalk" then?



And 20 years later, all men will have beards.



One hell of a stag night...



They never, ever lost at human statues.

Congo



To Africa next, as we search for the Lost City of Ziiiiinj, home of King Solomon's diamond

mine, in this Michael Crichton adap.

RICH: I've read the book. The book is shit.

NICK: But I love old Tarzan movies, *King Solomon's Mines* and monkeys, and this was an attempt to bring back all that.

Bruce Campbell pops up. Before being killed by an unseen something, he reports finding a chemically flawless blue crystal.

IAN: 100% pure methamphetamine? No, it's a rare blue diamond. We meet Amy, a gorilla with a glove that translates sign language into speech. "Amy good gorilla. Amy pretty."

RICH: Amy bit full of herself.

IAN: I'd love one of those gloves. It'd be great for flicking the Vs.

JORDAN: Guy in a suit or animatronics?

NICK: I'm saying real monkey. Or a monkey in a monkey suit: the ultimate special effect.

Amy's part of a second expedition that'll follow the signal of a "communications laser" left at the scene. Funding it: Tim Curry's Romanian philanthropist.

RICH: What the hell's that accent?

IAN: I think he's had dental work and the anaesthetic hasn't worn off.

NICK: It's the sound of phlegm. Spit it out, man!

We encounter a "ghost tribe", whose faces are painted white.

IAN: Goths get everywhere. They should trade a Sisters Of Mercy LP for some supplies.

JORDAN: This jungle's so stagey. Where are the vistas?

NICK: It does have a Disneyland ride vibe.

They find a traumatised survivor of the first expedition. Seeing Amy and guide Ernie Hudson, he screams in horror.

IAN: Clearly he has a phobia of Ghostbusters.

Amy's paintings include an all-seeing eye; this suggests she knows the location of the Lost City of Zinj.

RICH: Hang on, did Ronald D Moore rip this off in *Galactica*?

IAN: If Amy starts smoking a cigar, we'll know.

The party's attacked by a species of intelligent, aggressive grey gorillas. Centuries ago, they were trained to protect the mine.

NICK: Machine guns vs gorillas! This is cinema!

JORDAN: Oh my god, there's chunks of monkey.

RICH: Is that a Ben & Jerry's flavour? A character grabs the

communications laser, jams in a diamond to super-charge it, and unleashes a death ray on the gorillas! "Put 'em on the endangered species list!" she quips.

RICH: Oh. My. God.

IAN: That's about the only thing Jeremy Clarkson *hasn't* done.

JORDAN: They'll only top that if she beats a panda to death with a baby seal.

Now the nearby volcano has erupted. The gorillas that haven't been fried are buried in lava.

RICH: They're burning alive! This is the cruellest film.

IAN: Now it's the Lost City of Singed.

NICK: Can this be retconned into *Planet Of The Apes*? Maybe this is what led to the apes having a grudge.



He also has some Pringles in his satchel.



Attention! RSPCA Alert! RSPCA Alert!



Didn't read the warning on the side.



Now that's what we call flossing.

Species



This SF-horror concerns a beautiful alien/human hybrid on a mission to mate

with Earth males. Escaping a government lab, a young Sil (played by a pre-*Dawson's Creek* Michelle Williams) sneaks onto a train, pinching cash and, er, some pan scourers?! As she tucks into chocolate mousse, intestine-like tentacles erupt from her face, dragging her up the wall.

JORDAN: I'm never eating chocolate mousse again.

A guard discovers something very strange indeed.

IAN: It's a vagina chrysalis!

Out wriggles a naked, fully-developed Sil. The team on her trail includes Michael Madsen's mercenary. "Nobody ever asked me to find anything they didn't want dead," he says.

IAN: I pity his girlfriend.

Alfred Molina's an anthropologist, Marg Helgenberger's a biologist, and Forrest Whitaker is an empath.

NICK: Couldn't they have combined these people into one decent character?

Ben Kingsley's geneticist explains they injected an egg with alien DNA, making the child female, "so it'd be more docile and controllable".

NICK: I wouldn't go on Twitter with that attitude, mate.

Sil goes home with a nightclub pick-up. Mid-snog, the chap starts gagging, and a pointy tongue bursts out of the back of his head.

NICK: Poor sod didn't even get to third base.

IAN: I'm never French kissing again. **Our heroes find menstrual blood.**

"If she's menstruating she's capable of reproduction," someone explains. "Yes, I know," says the geneticist.

RICH: That felt less like a scripted exchange and more like Ben Kingsley's despair.

Now Sil's in a pool with Thomas Jane, who ends up suffocated by bizarre means...

JORDAN: She's got boob tentacles!

IAN: I'm never making out in a pool with a complete stranger again.

RICH: Boob tentacles: great name for a heavy metal band.

NICK: "Vagina Chrysalis" could be the LP.

Much later, after having disguised herself by dying her hair, Sil ends up straddling Molina's character. Whitaker's empath sees flashes of the two at it.

JORDAN: Alfred Molina sex visions! That's a superpower no one wants.

IAN: I *really* don't want to see Alfred Molina's orgasm face.

Too late. Molina meets a sticky end – in more ways than one.

NICK: Compare this to *Under The Skin*; what a world of difference.

IAN: It's basically an exercise in giving 14-year-old boys a boner, then taking it away.

Just when we thought *Species* couldn't get any filthier, it, er,

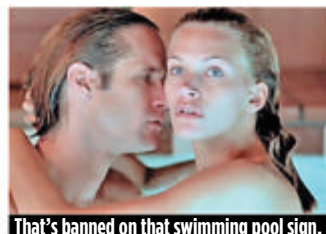
climaxes in a sewer-based showdown when Madsen's merc blows Sil's head off with a grenade launcher – to all's amusement.

"She was half us, half something else", muses the biologist.

"I wonder which was the predatory half?"

IAN: The half with the boob tentacles?

NICK: But she was all woman. Or was that Lisa Stansfield?



That's banned on that swimming pool sign.



Better than death by firing squad.





iHUMAN

The future is rushing in: Stephen Kelly on Channel 4's new TV show that takes a long, hard look at artificial intelligence

THERE COMES A POINT on the set of *Humans* when Gemma Chan, best known for roles in *Fresh Meat* and *Dates*, is Gemma Chan no more; when "action!" is called and all the excess, fidgety movements of humanity – an itchy nose here, a sloppy slouch of the shoulders there – melt away to reveal a deadeye statue of elegance, one whose economy of movement is beyond any of us, and startlingly surreal. In that moment she becomes Anita, she becomes almost... human.

And that, really, is the point. Anita is a Synth, one of the eerily lifelike robot servants that populate the parallel present of Channel 4's new sci-fi series, an adaptation of Swedish TV show *Äkta Människor* – in English, "Real Humans". It also happens to be the genre's latest take on artificial intelligence – a concept that has never been more relevant.

For SF has long been fascinated with the possibilities of AI, from the founding works of Isaac Asimov to the cinematic classics of *Blade Runner* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. But over the last few years science fiction has begun to edge ever closer to science fact, and it's fair to say that the world is unsettled. Just in the last year alone, we've had Microsoft founder Bill Gates wondering why more people are not concerned of its threat, physicist Stephen Hawking warning that it could end mankind and Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla Motors and SpaceX, comparing the technology to "summoning the devil".

"Well, it's been an amazing PR campaign for *Humans*," chuckles co-writer Sam

Vincent, who is on set today with writing partner Jonathan Brackley, both known for their work on BBC's *Spooks*. "I do think things like [Apple's] Siri have a lot to do with it – that increasingly human-like interface. And it's technology that far exceeds your understanding. There are so many things that your iPhone can do that you don't know about, and there's a deep communal unease about the vast untapped potential of this very friendly technology we carry around with us."

That unease, of course, is mirrored in contemporary culture – especially cinema. In the last three years we've seen AI put to the Turing test in *Ex Machina* and *Chappie*; witnessed bonds both platonic and romantic form in *Robot & Frank* and *Her*; and been at its mercy in *Transcendence*, *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* and *Terminator Genysis*. Yet unlike film, which can only centre on a single aspect of AI, the eight-part series of *Humans* will streamline many of the genre's different ideas into a 360-degree exploration; with various plotlines interweaving in a world where advances in artificial intelligence have made the latest must-have gadget a £15,000 subservient robot. (Don't worry, you can pay in instalments.)

There's William Hurt's George, a widower who has formed a close relationship with his out-of-date Synth Odi, who he treats more like a son; human Leo, played by Colin Morgan, and Synth Max (Ivanno Jeremiah), a duo on the run for reasons unclear; the comic relief of Rebecca Front's overbearing NHS-funded carer Synth, Vera; and Neil Maskell's reverent role of police officer DS Peter Drummond, ➔



Gemma Chan plays Synth Anita, here to help with housework.



Someone's watching you...

“Every aspect of physical movement had to be considered and nothing could be taken for granted”

who works for a special unit dedicated to Synth-related crime. This is just one of the many new problems of AI Britain, alongside the growing worry that robots will make humans obsolete, as articulated by an anti-Synth organisation called We Are People. After all, what will happen to our jobs?

“You’ll see them manning call centres, functioning as waiters, caring for the elderly... But we were very clear we didn’t want a clear dystopia or a clear utopia,” explains Vincent, “that’s for the audience to decide. We wanted to ground it in as many negative and as many positive aspects of a world of intelligent android servants as possible. We’ve always pictured a couple at home arguing going, ‘This would be a nightmare,’ and the other going, ‘What do you mean? It’d be great!’”

DOMESTIC CONFLICTS

“Grounded” is a word that Vincent and Brackley use a lot. And unlike its Swedish original, currently in limbo after its second series, *Humans* doesn’t necessarily identify as genre. Instead, it roots itself in the domestic, in the everyday effects of living in such a huge SF idea; a tonal approach that comes across clearly in one of *Humans*’ most prominent storylines: the Hawkins family, whose plush, suburban home we find ourselves in today.

It is through the dysfunctional Hawkins that we first meet Anita, a pliant Synth bought by Joe (Tom Goodman-Hill) under the misguided idea that it will make life easier for his wife Laura, played by *The IT Crowd*’s Katherine Parkinson, and their three children.

“Joe is the last human left in a factory run by Synths so he’s used to them,” says Goodman-

Hill, who is sitting next to on-screen spouse Parkinson. “He sees it as like getting a new dishwasher or a second car, which he thinks will save his relationship, help sort the kids out, but it turns out rather differently.”

“In this family set-up,” adds Parkinson, “it’s meant to allow us to have more time for each other – because I’m not managing my career as a lawyer with housework, and he’s not having to work and do chores at the same time – but then they find that it just gives them more time to look at a screen. Or, in the case of Laura, she’s feeling threatened as a mother, like when her youngest says that she wants the Synth to read the bedtime story rather than her because, ‘Anita doesn’t rush.’”

A DIFFERENT CLASS

Learning how *not* to be human

According to movement expert Dan O’Neill, the Synths of *Humans* are not actually designed to be robotic. Instead, they are intended to represent the human body at its maximum efficiency.

“We indicate non-verbally all the time how we feel,” he says. “We all sit in a chair and slant, cross our legs and project our level of interest. If you’re a machine you’ve got no attitude to project, and you’ve only got so many hours of battery a day, so we tried to find the plainest way of moving.”

To achieve such movement, Dan put the actors through workshops called Synth School, where stars such as Gemma Chan learnt how to use their bodies without all the eccentricities that naturally kick in when we walk, stand or turn.

“I took them through various exercise – we even had a Synth disco where they danced to Beyonce. It was all about not being instinctive, getting rid of physical static when we move, to move in one piece. I worked on the principle that they’re computers, so I said to imagine that you’ve already stood, that you’re just fulfilling an instruction, like printing. There’s no effort in it, it’s like a past action. It was really difficult for the actors. It’s such a fine line – to be close to human but not be one.”



Leo (Colin Morgan) is on the run for reasons as yet unknown.



Would you want an android carer looking after you?



"And this envelope in no way contains a bribe?"

"I THINK
THEY'D BE OUR
SUPERIORS..."

Colin Morgan heads into
the Uncanny Valley



Tell us about your character, Leo.

● There's a lot of question marks for Leo. He's a dark character, a man on a mission, a haunted man. He's got a very complicated past and it's making sense of that for himself in the world, which is in a constant battle between what it is to be a human any more, and what is this new technology that is now part of our lives and is making us question ourselves, question the world and the meaning of everything.

What drew you into *Humans* in the first place?

● It's cleverly written to the point where you're never quite sure where it's going to go and how it's going to turn out. All the connections and links come at a very unexpected, curvy, twisty, kind of way.

How would you feel about this technology happening in real life?

● It's a big question because we're not talking about science fiction here, we're talking about reality. Labs right now are developing this kind of thing. It's both worrying and exciting. I think without a doubt, by 2050, this kind of technology is going to be here, and I don't think they would be our equals, I think they'd be our superiors. Stephen Hawking said it a few months back: if artificial intelligence did develop, they would overtake us. They'd be our dominant ones. So: scary and exciting.

Would you have a Synth?

● I get the impression that they'd freak you out after a while. There's this theory called the "Uncanny Valley" - they're just like you, but there's something off. And it makes you feel uncomfortable because it makes you aware of your own mortality in a way. They're all about efficiency of movements, and humans aren't about that - we can feel awkward in our shells sometimes.



With limited battery life, all movements must achieve maximum efficiency.

The idea of how technology will affect future generations is particularly potent for Parkinson, whose second child is only a few months old - "don't talk to me about breast pumps!" - and is on set with her today.

"It scares me. A world where they're growing up and they're experiencing so much through a screen that I have no part of. It's little things. The fact that my daughter is never going to ask me about things like the tides of the Moon because she'll probably go to Google - I find that really sad!"

And then there's Anita herself, played by Gemma Chan, who has had to go through "Synth School" in order to strike the balance between human and robot, and rid herself of all the movements a Synth would regard as a waste of battery power. "We literally had to learn how to walk again," explains Chan, who's monitored by her trainer, Dan O'Neill, on set. "Every aspect of physical movement had to be considered and nothing could be taken for granted."

Yet while Anita, like all Synths, runs on electricity, she is built with the capacity to develop, as seen in episode one where she learns the appropriate amount of time to laugh at one of Joe's jokes. But it's this that allows her to gradually build up a personality and

relationship, leading her to, every so often, exhibit something remarkably human. But what does humanity even mean?

"It's something we get into in quite a literal way in the show," says Vincent. "A simulated human brain with feelings and thoughts is almost impossible to conceive of because we cannot conceive how actual human brains work... Philosophers, scientists and neuroscientists can't even agree on what consciousness is.

"It's no secret that these machines have an untested ability to feel and are very 'smart' - I mean that in the technical way like a smart TV - but whether they're truly intelligent? How would you even know that you've accomplished it? How would you know if you've created a machine that can truly think or feel? In a way, these perfectly built consciousnesses would be a purer form of humanity - they don't have all the eccentricities and the oddities of general humanity. But what is humanity? Is it a quality, or is it a state? Can a machine ever be understood to have it? You'll just have to watch the show and find out for yourself." **SFX**

Humans is due to air on Channel 4 in June.



20

THE
GREATEST FILMS OF SFX'S LIFETIME
YEARS

In the third of our celebratory 20/20 features looking back at two decades of SFX, Josh Winning catalogues the best the big screen had to offer in sci-fi

#sfx20

WEB-SHOOTING SUPERHEROES.

Time-warped teens. Loveable tin-can robots. The past 20 years have served up their fair share of spectacular genre films. In fact, the past two decades have seen a huge surge in the popularity of sci-fi and fantasy: *Avatar* remains the highest-grossing film ever made (\$2.7bn), with *Avengers Assemble* not too far behind (\$1.5bn). "This [is] our time of streaming into the main," Joss Whedon enthused in 2012, and he was right. All those amazing movies haven't made it easy for us to select our favourite 20 films of SFX's lifetime. In fact this was the most brutal thunderdome of our four-part anniversary celebrations. There were casualties along the way – *Avengers*, *Harry Potter*, *District 9* – but here's our choice of the movies that defined the first 20 years of SFX...

SPIDER-MAN 2 (2004)

Peter Parker has graduated high school in this second cinematic spin, providing an apt metaphor for Sam Raimi's film, the best of his Spidey trilogy. Bigger and more mature than its predecessor, *Spider-Man 2* partly adapted an iconic storyline ("Spider-Man No More!") and threw in some surprisingly muscular action for good measure – including that breathtaking Spidey v Doc Ock scrap aboard a rapid transit R train. Exploring grown-up themes with a twinkly-eyed warmth, it's the best Spider-Man film bar none.





Spidey only wanted a short back and sides.



"And this one's in Near Mint condition!"

UNBREAKABLE (2000)

Cannily forging a compelling comic-book movie long before Marvel launched its cinematic universe (though the same year the similarly prescient first *X-Men* was released), M Night Shyamalan proved he was ahead of the curve with his follow-up to *The Sixth Sense*. Bruce Willis and Samuel L Jackson are perfectly cast as total opposites – one an indestructible lunk, the other a frail genius – and the film itself is a dark, thrilling fable, and the last time Shyamalan was truly great.

PAN'S LABYRINTH (2006)

Long before Disney started cranking the cogs on its live-action fairytale redos, Guillermo del Toro delivered his own skin-crawling bedtime story. Grim but beautiful, *Pan's Labyrinth* is awash with nightmarish imagery, boasting one of cinema's nastiest baddies (the skull-smashing Captain Vidal). The old-school prosthetics are a dream, too, with Doug Jones taking on numerous monster roles. "Shooting *Pan's* became a war about me not compromising," del Toro said. He won.



Auntie Beryl's party trick.

ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND (2004)

Kate Winslet with blue hair was the least weird thing about this memory-warping drama from director Michel Gondry. Starring a never-better Jim Carrey in "straight man" mode, *Eternal Sunshine's* delicious brew of incongruous elements blended romance, sci-fi and a non-linear narrative to create something equal parts heartbreaking and mind-boggling. "I feel like I won the lottery," Carrey enthused of the film at the time. Us too, Jim. ➔



They're happy because they eat lard.

20 GREATEST FILMS



Scarlett Johansson:
white van woman.

UNDER THE SKIN (2014)

Sparse and darkly seductive, Jonathan Glazer's peek at the human race through alien eyes provided one of 2013's most unique and unsettling viewing experiences. Initially pegged as an "arthouse *Species*", it proves far more interesting and complex than that as Scarlett Johansson's emotionless ET-in-disguise observes humanity while seducing men to sate some sort of predatory appetite. As much a study of humanity as it is a deconstruction of Johansson's own glamorous screen image, *Under The Skin* is a rich, weird, absorbing masterpiece.

INCEPTION (2010)

Slotting this twisty thriller in-between his final two Batman films, Christopher Nolan's *Inception* is a bogglingly intelligent Rubik's cube of a movie, constantly wrong-footing expectations. And, yes, intelligent it may be, but it's also one of the most entertaining blockbusters of the decade, featuring some staggering action setpieces – Joseph Gordon-Levitt's gravity-defying shootout is a highlight.

THE MATRIX (1999)

Leather trench coats. Kung fu. Bullet time. It's small wonder the Wachowskis' genre-blending blockbuster emerged as the coolest sci-fi movie of 1999; *The Phantom Menace* may have thrashed it at the box office, but *The Matrix* was the film on everybody's lips come time for those end-of-year lists. Branded "the most influential action movie of a generation" by industry know-it-alls, it's a cyberpunk's dream of manga-influenced human v robot battles, with Keanu Reeves at the centre of it all practically going, "Like, woah."

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING (2001)



Taking on the mammoth task of adapting JRR Tolkien's "unfilmable" books, Peter Jackson redefined cinematic genre fare and set the template for just about every fantasy flick thereafter. Though this first outing only offers a glimpse at the CGI wonder that is Gollum, it impresses even more as an assured trilogy opener. Most importantly, Jackson created a Middle-earth we could believe in.

THE DARK KNIGHT (2008)

"Why so serious?" growled Heath Ledger's Joker in this middle entry of Christopher Nolan's Bat trilogy, delivering a performance so masterful he wiped the floor with Jack Nicholson's "defining" earlier portrayal. More bombastic than *Batman Begins*, more purposeful than *The Dark Knight Rises*, TDK was a defining moment for "realistic" comic-book movies. Serpentine, dark as hell (but funny, too), it set the bar for comic adapts thereafter. Few have come close since.

LOOPER (2012)

Proving that James Cameron didn't corner the market in time-travel cleverness, Rian Johnson followed up his uber-cool teen drama *Brick* with this trippy SF masterpiece. Nodding to *Blade Runner* and *Terminator*, but never ripping them off, *Looper*'s barmy premise (Joseph Gordon-Levitt is a younger version of Bruce Willis, whom he's tasked with killing) manages to be equal parts grisly (that body-hacking segment), intense (house go boom), funny (Jeff Daniels) and thrilling (any one of JGL's action moments). It's the definition of a modern classic.



At least they're not
sat behind him.

DONNIE DARKO (2001)

When it comes to movie debuts, few would argue that Richard Kelly's mind-masher of a teen flick isn't up there as one of the greatest. Like an indie kid's acid trip, it's a twisted coming-of-age and mathematical equation gone mad (the numbers 28 and 88 recur throughout) as troubled teen Donnie (Jake Gyllenhaal) deals with the apocalypse while suffering visions of a creepy bunny. Though Kelly released a director's cut that explained away most of the film's mysteries, the original, far more ambiguous cut remains superior.

WALL-E (2008)

Toy Story introduced audiences to CGI animation, but it took *WALL-E* for Pixar to really demonstrate what it was capable of. The first 20 minutes are a sublime poem to silent film – almost entirely dialogue-free, the rapturous visuals play second fiddle to elegant character work as the titular rust bucket melts our hearts. Though

One of these men is a
crime-obsessed psycho...



Looper even had
top motors.



Yeah, but he's no
Collin Burns.



Leo about to get in a spin in *Inception*.

what follows is less bold, it remains riveting sci-fi – soulful despite all the hardware, clever despite being a “kids” film, it’s still one of Pixar’s finest.

LET THE RIGHT ONE IN (2008)

In the wake of *Twilight*’s neutered glitter-vamps, this little Swedish gem injected new blood into neck-biting flicks. Unbelievably dark and disturbing, its twisted tale of young love couldn’t help but induce shivers, and heralded an impressive new talent in director Tomas Alfredson (who went on to make the very different but equally riveting *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*). It was so good that director Matt Reeves basically copied it frame for frame in his American remake.



Scratch-and-sniff trees: popular with some.

KICK-ASS (2010)

With a title that’s both statement and promise, director Matthew Vaughn’s adaptation of Mark Millar and John Romita Jr.’s comic gleefully picks apart superhero clichés for something that’s wickedly funny and violent (Vaughn channels Quentin Tarantino both behind the camera and on the superbad soundtrack). Aaron Taylor-Johnson’s a likeable every-hero but even Nicolas Cage’s hilarious Adam West impression can’t compete with 13-year-old Chloë Grace Moretz, who steals the movie right from under her co-stars’ noses as the purple-wigged, foul-mouthed Hit-Girl.





During a zombie outbreak, Persil will also come in handy.

SHAUN OF THE DEAD (2004)

While Danny Boyle refused to refer to the brain-munching baddies in *28 Days Later* as “zombies”, *Shaun Of The Dead* embraced its groaning galumphers with teary-eyed joy. Coming out of nowhere (its creative team were best known for a little show called *Spaced*), it single-handedly made stars of Simon Pegg, Nick Frost and director Edgar Wright, and forged its own genre – lest we forget, the rom-zom-com, which is still alive and well today in films like *Life After Beth*.



THE TRUMAN SHOW (1998)

Released at the dawn of reality TV, *The Truman Show* couldn't have been more prescient. While *EDtv* played the concept for laughs, *The Truman Show* went for something deeper, darker and far more complex, daring to question just why we guzzle up reality TV – and what that says about humanity.

SPIRITED AWAY (2001)

Studio Ghibli had already been operating for almost 20 years before *Spirited Away* broke through into the mainstream, and Western audiences who weren't geeky Japan-o-philes finally discovered the wonder of Miyazaki's animated worlds. *Spirited Away* presents quite a world, as young Chihiro's parents are transformed into pigs and she enters a magical otherworld. A giddily surreal parable replete with dragons, big-headed witches and floating phantoms, *Spirited Away* was like a Disney animator's nightmare committed to celluloid.

Wait till she catches who dropped those drawing pins!

SERENITY (2005)

Before he assembled the Avengers, Joss Whedon took his first pop at the big screen with this *Firefly* resurrection, reuniting that show's core cast for what turned out to be their (elegiac) swansong. Would Whedon's



trademark TV snark translate to cinemas? It's hard to remember a time anybody doubted him. Despite a limited budget (just \$39m) and not an A-lister in sight, *Serenity* was everything the *Star Wars* prequels weren't – quippy, thought-provoking and hella entertaining. We live in hope of a sequel...

STAR TREK (2009)

Set phasers to thrill! It could have been a cynical reboot for a franchise that was, frankly, lost in space, but under the guard of uber-nerd JJ Abrams, this new *Trek* managed to satisfy fans both old and new. With its nifty alternate timeline (yay, past movies are still canon!), spot-on casting (Chris Pine as Kirk!) and the kind of matinee setpieces usually associated with *Star Wars*, Abrams ensured his *Trek* had smarts, thrills and a perfect cameo for Leonard Nimoy.

GALAXY QUEST (1999)

Dean Parisot's sci-fi spoof was so ahead of its time, it had to wait a decade before it was crowned a cult classic. We championed it from the off, though, not least because the premise is genre gold – aliens think tapes of a creaky old sci-fi show are actually “historical documents” and beam in its cast to help them fight an intergalactic scourge. The cast had so much fun, they're still talking about making *Galaxy Quest 2*.

Agree with our choices? Vote on the list at gamesradar.com/sfx-20. Next issue: Books.



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Neal Stephenson

The US writer tells us about his new novel and why he can't write eight hours a day...

WORDS BY JONATHAN WRIGHT PORTRAIT BY REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Back when he worked for Amazon founder Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin spaceflight start-up in the noughties, cyberpunk luminary Neal Stephenson got interested in the fact that human-made junk orbits our Earth. So what? Better up there than here, right?

Not necessarily. As bits of this junk bump into each other, there might be "a kind of exponential blow-up" in debris. If things got too bad it might become "too risky to send anything at all into orbit".

For Stephenson, this was the starting point for his latest novel, *Seveneves*. "The science fiction writer in me just said, 'Well, why not just expand that enormously and turn it into the premise for a world?'" he explains.

But there was a problem. Having come up with the notion of a disaster – specifically our Moon exploding – that would make it necessary for mankind to move to space, Stephenson wasn't sure what to do with his scenario.

"I didn't know if it was an idea for a book or a movie or a videogame or a television series," he says. "I've actually pitched it in all of those forms over the years, but was never quite able to figure out what to do with it. Finally, about a year-and-a-half ago, I just said, 'Fuck it, I'm just going to write the thing as a novel and see what happens.'"

Good, because the tale of how humankind comes to move out beyond our atmosphere in earnest makes for a fine yarn, albeit one with plenty of grim happenings. In particular, there's the moment when a "Hard Rain" of Moon rocks falls upon the Earth, wiping away our world as we've known it.

It would be grand to think that, were such an event to come to pass, humankind might set aside its differences. In Stephenson's vision of the future, though, all too many of the survivors take their arguments into space. Violence

and even cannibalism ensue. It's perhaps no wonder, therefore, that one of Stephenson's themes is how to rebuild populations that have reached a near-extinction point.

The ideas Stephenson puts forward draw on

"We've lost a lot of the seat-of-the-pants knowledge that people used to have"

discussions with writer and counter-cultural figure Stewart Brand, and his wife, social entrepreneur Ryan Phelan. Both are leading lights in the Long Now Foundation, an organisation that, to quote its website, "hopes to provide a counterpoint to today's accelerating culture and help make long-term thinking more common".

One of the case studies the couple are interested in, says Stephenson, is that of the black-headed ferret, a North American predator that eats prairie dogs. A dangerous specialisation. The animals' population crashed when farmers killed all the prairie dogs. "To rebuild the species from that kind of genetic bottleneck leads to concerns about inbreeding – or what they call loss of heterozygosity," explains Stephenson. "It's actually a topic that is being looked at right now by geneticists: how do you start with a small population and propagate a species that's got a sufficient amount of heterozygosity, or the opposite of inbreeding, to become viable?" Mildest of mild spoilers: in *Seveneves*, the solution involves genetic engineering.

That conversations with Stephenson tend to arrive at such arcane subjects isn't a great surprise. The son of scientists, his writing since he started out in the 1980s has constantly drawn on cutting-edge research. He's a geek, who often works part-time in the technology sector. "I can't write eight hours a day or it all goes sour, so I pursue technical things, it's a good way to get my mind off a book," he says.

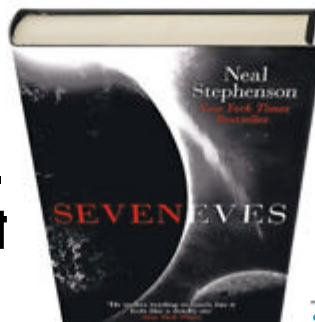
Currently, that means working as chief futurist with Magic Leap. The company is "building a new display technology" within the field of augmented reality, which involves "three-dimensional figments" projected into a user's eye.

This need to get involved, you'd guess, also plays into the Hieroglyph project, which Stephenson launched in 2011, and which aims to infuse SF with an optimistic spirit that might in turn help inspire people to "get big stuff done".

But that involves people having the necessary skills to do this. Does Stephenson think there's enough engineering know-how in the general population? He answers by talking about technical drawing. (Stay with us here...) Once, anyone could learn this, although it could be "tedious". Then product design became the preserve of those who can use complex CAD (computer-aided design) programs. "For a while, this took drafting out of the hands of anyone with a ruler and made it the exclusive preserve of a kind of technical priesthood," he says.

Now, though, programs such as SketchUp are making design tools far more accessible. "The pendulum is swinging back the other way so that anyone can do it, but we've lost a lot of the seat-of-the-pants knowledge that people used to have when they came out of a background on the farm or in the garage, places where you could do hands-on work," he says. "It's going to take a little while to get that back, but I hope that will happen."

If it does, Stephenson himself, a practical optimist, will be due credit for encouraging things along.



Seveneves is on sale now.

BIODATA

► **OCCUPATION:** Novelist

► **BORN:** 1959

► **FROM:** Maryland

► **GREATEST HITS:**

Among many other career highlights, the award-winning *Baroque Cycle*, set in the enlightenment era and dealing with the birth of modern science (literally science fiction...), redefined what SF might be.

► **RANDOM FACT:**

The codename for the Kindle was "Fiona", a reference to Stephenson's *Diamond Age* (1995), which features an interactive book.



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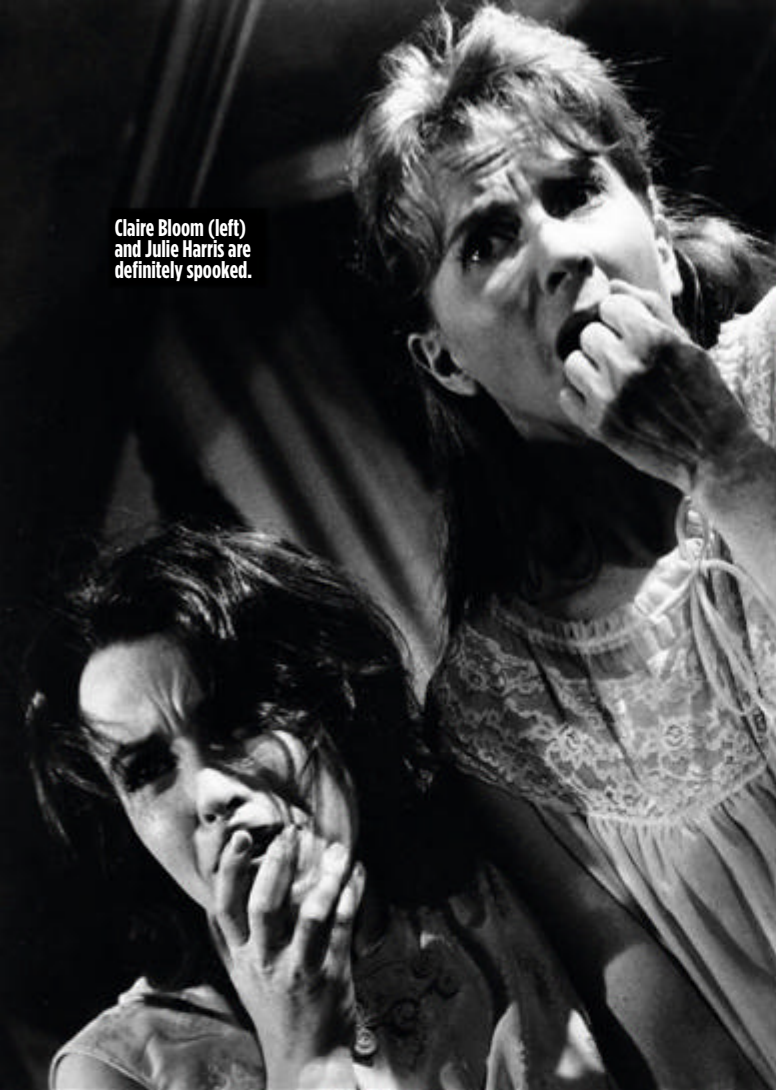
1963



THE HAUNTING

Five decades on, *The Haunting* is still the ultimate big-screen ghost story. Calum Waddell sleeps with the lights on...

Claire Bloom (left) and Julie Harris are definitely spooked.



Richard Johnson isn't about to give Julie Harris a passionate kiss.

THERE ARE SOME FRIGHT-FILM fans who argue that the old adage "It's what you don't see that's most terrifying" only applies if you grew up in the era before the splatter movie boom. Was the stylish Count Dracula of Christopher Lee's time honestly more effective than the icky arterial geysers of Eli Roth or the *Saw* franchise? Yet, there is still the occasional old-fashioned shocker that – even to this day – manages to raise more goosebumps than the graphic gore of your average blood-opera.

Case in point: Robert Wise's 1963 "old dark house" epic, *The Haunting*.

Shot in black and white, with a minimal cast of four, and featuring not even a drop of spilled blood, you'd be forgiven for thinking that the end result may not have dated especially well. Yet, with just the use of its creeping camerawork, and a few sudden, spooky sounds, *The Haunting* holds up as one of the most eerily effective genre creepers ever made.

Focusing its story in just one location – a malevolent maze-like mansion in the English countryside – and largely basing its paranormal antagonism around a solitary female character (an introverted singleton, in her late thirties, called Eleanor), Wise's poltergeist-ridden classic is the perfect example of "less is more".

TOP CAST

The director – who would go on to make *The Sound Of Music* – cast a classic quartet of esteemed screen actors as his movie's daring ghostly-investigators. Alongside the late Julie Harris, as the picture's hysterical leading lady, is the American-born Russ Tamblyn (from *West Side Story*) and two old Shakespearians in Claire Bloom and Richard

Johnson. In a period of Hammer period-romps and Roger Corman monster movies, their performances bring an astute and believable conviction to the film.

"Yes, that was very deliberate," states Johnson when *SFX* catches up with him. "Robert Wise did not want anybody to be laughing at this movie. The idea was that this was going to be a horror film that actually scared people for once [laughs]. So, for instance, he told us that when we were threatened by something in the story we were not to look at each other's eyes. He said, 'That would be too much like a

B-movie – and everyone will laugh at the screen.'

So no one in *The Haunting* looks from one person to the next when a ghostly sound appears. It was all to be played with complete sincerity."

Based on the novel *The Haunting Of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson, *The Haunting* was made while Johnson was under contract to



"ROBERT WISE DID NOT WANT ANYBODY TO BE LAUGHING AT THIS MOVIE"

MGM. Interestingly, just the previous year, he had opted to turn down the James Bond role – despite being Terence Young’s original choice for *Dr No* – so that he could spend more time with his first love: the theatre...

“It had always been two jobs for me: the stage and the screen,” says the RADA graduate, who was 36 years old when he made *The Haunting*. “I started off in the theatre, as almost all of the actors of my generation did, and I never wanted to lose my ties to that world. Anything that was going to take me away from there, no matter how incredible the role, was going to be difficult to justify. Believe it or not, I was actually performing in a play called *The Devils*, which many of your readers might know because it became the famous Ken Russell film, back when I made *The Haunting*. That was my sacrifice though – I was performing *The Devils* at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in London, and it was this massive three-and-a-half hour part, and then I was getting up at 6am in the morning and driving to the set of *The Haunting* at Hertfordshire.”

In interviews prior to his death in 2005, Wise would claim that *The Haunting* was his favourite filmmaking experience. According to his leading man, part of that might be because everyone – both cast and crew – were having a great time, in spite of the rumours that Julie Harris was suffering from severe depression during its production.

WISE DIRECTION

“I remember it all being quite a good laugh,” continues Johnson. “Robert Wise was aptly named. He was a brilliant and wise man – especially in regards to filmmaking. I remember asking him, because I was still learning at that point, ‘Robert, what do you think I should know about the difference between acting in the theatre and acting on-camera?’ He said, ‘Richard, the main thing is not to blink too much. If you blink a lot and it is seen on a 40-foot screen it becomes quite a magnified gesture.’ So Robert would sometimes stop a shot and say, ‘No, please, you are blinking too much – cut it out.’ He was quite adamant that this could ruin a scene [laughs]. He said, ‘If you need to blink, it is best



Julie Harris died in 2013; Richard Johnson is still going strong at 87.

Well, at least it wasn't called *Hell House*...



“I’m afraid it’s going to be a bugger to fit a Stannah Stairlift!”



A Weeping Angel thrown into the mix would make things *really* scary.

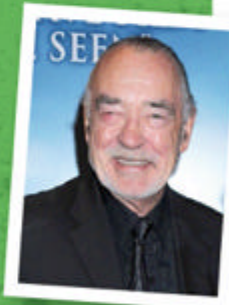
to look down’ and he whispered to me, ‘If you are working with a good-looking actress, Richard, that is also the opportunity for you to have a peek down her blouse’ [laughs]. He was a really good-humoured man, and that was what it was like doing *The Haunting*. I read later that Julie felt we weren’t taking the film seriously enough – and that was why she had become upset – but it was really just a laid-back atmosphere. I suppose nobody knew that this little horror movie was going to come out and be as effective as it was – except perhaps its wonderful director.”

Despite its release in the early 1960s, *The Haunting* also pushes some boundaries in boasting a relatively open gay character in Claire Bloom’s Theodora – although, given its era, her sexuality is unfortunately treated with revulsion by her co-star Julie Harris. This aspect of the film is, arguably, the sole sore spot in the entire movie – and the only element that actually dates the onscreen delirium. Otherwise this slow-burning story of paranormal peril retains the ability to sneak up on even the most seasoned of scary movie buffs and produce a few good sharp shocks...

“Again, that is all down to Robert,” agrees

FROM SHAKESPEARE TO SHOCK

Even though he is well past retirement age, and more mainstream roles continue to arrive in his lap (such as 2008’s *The Boy In The Striped Pyjamas*), Richard Johnson maintains a presence at genre conventions and happily autographs stills from his genre past. Whilst *The Haunting* is perhaps his most critically acclaimed offering, he also made a mark on the fabled “video nasties” list thanks to his turn as a Dr Moreau-style scientist in Lucio Fulci’s timeless *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (1979). Shot in Cinemascope, as with *The Haunting*, the end result is a classic in its own right – with Johnson meeting his doom via a gut-crunching ghoul who takes a large bite from his face! We bet he didn’t have to encounter that at RADA...





Try watching *The Haunting* with the lights out – if you dare!

“I REMEMBER IT ALL BEING A GOOD LAUGH. IT WAS REALLY JUST A LAID-BACK ATMOSPHERE”

Johnson. “He was all about the timing. He knew exactly when an actor had to come in and hit their mark – or when they were just to be totally silent. This was a movie about something unseen – and Robert was always plotting how the camera was going to indicate that we were in peril. He didn’t want to show anything. It was all to be left to your imagination. He said to me, ‘You just remember your lines, and make sure you get to the right spot on the floor. Just leave everything else to me.’ The less you do, he felt, was better – and I put my full confidence in him. That is the nub of it, I think – less is more. The audience deserves something special – they don’t need to be fed everything.”

Audiences in 1963 – who had just thrilled to Alfred Hitchcock’s Technicolor tale of animal insanity *The Birds* – did not flock to *The Haunting*. It was a middling success for MGM (just failing to gross back its estimated \$1.5 million budget). Today, Wise’s classic is frequently rated as among the greatest genre outings ever produced. Martin Scorsese and Steven Spielberg have both named it as their all-time favourite frightener – while a 1999 remake (above right), from Jan de Bont, was

rightly criticised for replacing tension and terror with extensive CGI wizardry. Deservingly, it received only Razzies. Johnson maintains he has never seen it (“Why would I do that?” he chuckles).

Nevertheless, the actor’s role in *The Haunting* would, strangely, lead him into a new direction in his own life. As the years went on, and this unassuming chiller gained in both fans and critical feedback, Johnson would find himself in demand from – of all places – the Italian horror world. Ten years after *The Haunting* made its debut, the actor would add a touch of credibility to *Beyond The Door* (1974), a hugely profitable European *Exorcist* spin-off, and take on the main roles in such spaghetti gore-fests as *The Night Child* (1975), *Island Of The Fishmen* (1979) and *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (1979)...

CAREER IN HORROR

“*The Haunting* was what gave me my genre stripes,” Johnson enthuses. “Some years later, a lot of the emerging Italian directors contacted me and told me they had appreciated it. I was asked to do some more

SAME AGAIN, BUT A LOT WORSE

Released in the same summer that *The Blair Witch Project* provided horror-hounds with what might well be the true heir to *The Haunting*’s subtle “things that go bump in the night” approach, Jan de Bont’s rehash was everything the original wasn’t. Despite a whopping \$80 million budget and an A-list cast, including Liam Neeson and Owen Wilson, the biggest problem with the modern rehash is that it shows everything. Moreover, made in the era where CGI generally looked like, well, digital animation, the movie’s various ghostly happenings are more akin to an episode of *Scooby-Doo* than an effective update of a beloved macabre-masterpiece. It’s now largely forgotten. We’d wager that any future attempt to revitalise the fearful atmosphere of Robert Wise’s original will have learned that less is most certainly more.



A decent cast wasn’t nearly enough.

horror movies and I thought, ‘Well why not? I don’t need to defend making these films. And if it does not work out I can go back to the theatre whenever I wish.’ I was very lucky in that regard – and, anyway, I enjoyed mixing it all up. I was having a great time and I realised that I was a very lucky man. I was young and fancy free – and these talented Italian directors were going to look after me like I was a piece of very rare well-cut glass. I was also going to see the world, meet some wonderful and interesting people... well, what is not to like about that? We shot *Zombie Flesh Eaters* out in the Caribbean with first-class accommodation. And it is my horror films that people remember – over everything else. So, clearly, they have stood the test of time.”

Now aged 87, Johnson remains on his toes (when *SFX* speaks to him, his latest drama – *Radiator* – has just won a nod for Best Picture at the annual Glasgow Film Festival). Charming beyond words, the good-humoured Essex-born performer retains his humour and his wits – but bemoans the fact his age means that good roles are few and far between...

“It is hard now to be my age and to do a movie,” he sighs. “They don’t write many parts for men in their eighties, unfortunately. But I still get to work and I love it when the fans mention these old movies to me. They live on and that is a wonderful legacy to have.” *SFX*

Executive Producer **M. Night Shyamalan**

Matt
Dillon

Juliette
Lewis

Terrence
Howard

Melissa
Leo

Toby
Jones

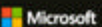


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★★★★★ Superb ★★★★★ Good ★★★★★ Average ★★★★★ Poor ★ Terrible

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Avengers: Age Of Ultron

We made you wait for it, but you know our verdict on Joss Whedon's superhero sequel is the only one that matters.

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Ex_Machina

Alex Garland's visually stunning thriller about a female robot deserves to be, er, garlanded with praise.

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Seveneves

The threat of lunar debris causes a flight from Earth in Neal Stephenson's vividly realised novel.

Avengers: Age Of Ultron

Bad Robot



Release Date: OUT NOW!

12A | 141 minutes

Director: Joss Whedon

Cast: Robert Downey Jr, Chris Evans, Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo, Scarlett Johansson, Jeremy Renner, James Spader, Elizabeth Olsen, Paul Bettany, Aaron Taylor-Johnson

IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE,

The Avengers was a landmark film.

The culmination of Marvel's multi-movie, universe-building experiment, it's not overstating matters to say the future of superhero cinema rested on its spandex-clad shoulders.

The weight of expectation on *Age Of Ultron* may not be quite the same – at this stage if Marvel builds it the world will come, and they know it – but that hasn't resulted in Whedon and co putting their feet up for the return of Earth's mightiest. Quite the contrary. *Age Of Ultron* is Marvel's most complex, ambitious and generally bloomin' massive movie to date.

During an all-out assault on the last remaining Hydra fortress, where twins Wanda and Pietro Maximoff have been given extraordinary powers ("He's fast, she's weird"), the Avengers recover Loki's mind-altering sceptre. After discovering the sceptre's gem contains an AI of unparalleled power, modern Prometheus Tony Stark combines

Marvel's most complex, ambitious and bloomin' massive movie to date

it with his Ultron initiative – a robotic peace force designed to render the Avengers obsolete. Before you can say HAL 9000 Ultron turns on his creator, deeming humanity itself the biggest threat to peace on Earth, and embarks on a good old-fashioned evil plan to expunge life from the planet.

Age Of Ultron is exactly one minute shorter than its predecessor, but crams so much more into that runtime you can't help but marvel at what Whedon has achieved. The plate-spinning skills perfected with ensemble casts on *Buffy*, *Firefly* and *Astonishing X-Men* have never been put to better use. It's a tale that takes the Avengers truly globetrotting, from Eastern European winter wonderlands to African cities bathed in a golden, magic hour glow. Almost every character gets their moment to shine and the plotting is meticulously tight, only occasionally falling victim to what must have been a brutal edit.

Hawkeye is the surprise show-stealer, with the first film's weak link given an extra dimension that suddenly makes the character work. The cracks in Cap and Iron Man's relationship come to the fore, a cautious set-up for *Civil War*, while Thor is plagued by Ragnarok-aluding visions of tragedies to come. Natasha and Bruce embark upon a romance that, though not the most satisfying direction in which to take those characters, has some touching moments if you're willing to go with it. Key new player Quicksilver is lacking a watercooler slow-mo sequence to rival his *Days Of Future Past* counterpart but, along with Scarlet Witch, is at the heart of the film's hero journey. And the Vision is a late addition to the team but a

worthy one, his introduction topped with a moment that rivals "Puny god" for sheer crowd-pleasing gusto. Paul Bettany was the perfect choice to bring the naive yet supremely powerful being to life.

But what about Ultron? For all that Marvel has done right in the seven years since *Iron Man*, creating captivating antagonists is not one of them. Ultron, however, is the studio's best big-screen villain since Loki, a twisted tin man with all the wisecracks, snark and smartest-man-in-the-room swagger you'd expect from an AI with Stark DNA in his circuits. James Spader imbues the bot with gravitas, menace and a palpably sinister edge, warping the entire tone of the film.

Yes, *Age Of Ultron* is a very different beast to *Avengers Assemble*

– deadly serious at times, with real emotional and psychological heft; the Maximoffs' tragic backstory and Black Widow's brutal training in particular are far from kid-friendly. But *Ultron* hasn't lost its predecessor's personality either, and in the face of impressive Hulk-busting, robot-swarming setpieces it's the moments of quiet, endearing irreverence that stick in the mind after. The riotous party at Stark Tower is an undoubted highlight – we won't be forgetting the look of satisfaction on Rhodey's face after finally nailing his anecdote in a hurry.

It's also a significantly slicker looking production. The first *Avengers* was shot in 1.85:1, often giving the film an oddly televisual quality, but *Age Of Ultron* is a comic

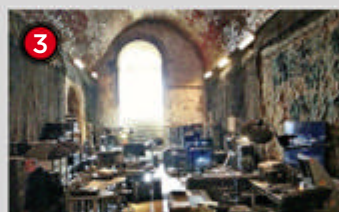
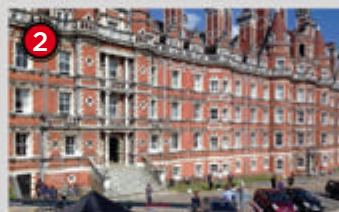
The Alton Towers day out went from bad to worse.





Location Location Location

Fancy paying a visit to Avengers world?



1 CAPTAIN AMERICA'S VISION

► The ballroom in Captain America's Scarlet Witch-induced vision was the Rivoli Ballroom in Lewisham, south-east London (SE4 2BY).

2 BLACK WIDOW'S VISION

► The ballet school in Black Widow's flashback wasn't in St Petersburg. It was actually Tring Park School For Performing Arts in Hertfordshire (HP23 5LX).

3 HYDRA'S BASE

► The inside of the Fort, the Hydra HQ, was filmed at Dover Castle in Kent.

4 TRAINING CENTRE EXTERIOR

► At the end, the New Avengers training room was actually Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, in Norwich (NR4 7TJ) - with interiors filmed in London at the ExCeL Centre.

5 THOR'S VISION

► Thor didn't really have a vision of Asgard - it was actually St Bartholomew the Great Church in Smithfield (EC1A 9DS).

book brought to life in vibrant widescreen: Scarlet Witch popping in and out of the panels as she alters the minds of our four-colour heroes, an eye-catching splash page with the Avengers in full line-up during the assault on Strucker's base... Whedon and *Guardians Of The Galaxy* DoP Ben Davis up their game hugely here, with every penny of that near \$300 million investment up there on the screen.

Still, it's hard to shake the feeling that *Ultron* isn't quite the equal of its beloved predecessor, mostly because it never quite reaches the same giddy, joyous highs. Part of that is down to the film's tonal shift - the plot is so much more serious that the humour occasionally gets lost, or feels out of place. That colossal cast-wrangling also has one major

victim - Thor, whose baffling cave subplot makes next to no sense in its current, heavily edited incarnation (though a future extended edition might clear things up). Black Widow gets short-changed too, a complicated character whose red ledger demons are forgotten in favour of far less interesting mummy issues. And as great as Ultron is, his vast robot army is as faceless as the Chitauri.

But it feels churlish to criticise when a film is quite this fun. Whedon has worked miracles, again, crafting a summer blockbuster which is equal parts smart, funny and exhilarating. Marvel's winning streak continues. **Jordan Farley**

Every Phase 2 film has featured a character getting their hand cut off - a reference to *The Empire Strikes Back*.



The bungee jump went horribly wrong.

Mad Max: Fury Road

Apocalyptic Gear

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

15 | 120 minutes

Director: George Miller

Cast: Tom Hardy, Charlize Theron, Nicholas Hoult, Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Zoe Kravitz, Hugh Keays-Byrne

BONKERS IS NOT A

description you often get to apply to filthy, dust storm-ravaged tales of post-apocalyptic wastelands and the people who live there, but in the hands of *Mad Max* director George Miller, it's become an apt one as this franchise has motored along to increasingly surreal places.

Now, 30 years since he went *Beyond Thunderdome*, Max is back. Or, more accurately, a "new interpretation" (Miller's description) is, with Tom Hardy assaying a slightly different take on the character than Mel Gibson's Max Rockatansky. Hardy's version is even more feral, though haunted by similar ghosts of people he couldn't save. Twitchy,

guttural and still driven by the need for survival, this Max faces an even more bizarre, barren world, albeit one that should be familiar to those who have watched the other movies.

Fury Road is one, long intense chase scene, broken up by brief breathers to let characters recoup. Max is captured by the War Boys, a savage cult that comes across like a Slipknot gig crossed with the kid from 1995's *Powder* cranked up to an insane degree, led by the wheezing, despotic Immortan Joe (Hugh Keays-Byrne). His is a society where those not chosen to live and serve alongside him must plead for the water he provides. The War Boys themselves are fanatics, driven by the promise of combat and glory, crazed and chaotic. And the women in his life are either there to serve as potential mothers for what he hopes will be a pure set of children to start dragging humanity from its ruined state, or milk factories. One major exception is Imperator Furiosa (Charlize Theron), who has

plans of her own to escape and take Joe's "wives" with him. Theron holds her own against the men, proving just as badass as anyone – even with one arm supplanted by a metallic tool.

Miller, his co-writers Brendan McCarthy and Nick Lathouris, and the stunt/special effects teams conjure up all manner of crazed setpieces as Joe chases down the desperate women. There's an impressive commitment to largely practical work here, with little in the way of digital trickery when it comes to the driving scenes. He's also amped up the hyper-real feel with different camera speeds, leaving you dizzy at times, which is quite an achievement in an era where blockbusters routinely try to impress but come away lacking something. The film's also beautiful to look at, with scorched orange wastelands during the day turning cool blue at night.

If there's a downside to the propulsive action, it's that *Fury Road* doesn't always feel like a completely cohesive film – and the story isn't exactly the most satisfying of narratives, more the hook for the motorised insanity. And for all that he takes it to the Max, Hardy never quite

makes the same impression as Gibson did back in the '80s. That's partly because Max feels a little swept up in things instead of driving the action (pun intended, because he does a lot of driving), and even as his early ferocity gives way to a more measured approach later on, it's tough to completely feel for him. Still, Hardy gives it his all, growling in a voice that shifts between Aussie, Bane-like depth and something animalistic. Nicholas Hoult, meanwhile, has a fine old time as Nux, a War Boy with big dreams of dying a glorious death who becomes entangled with Furiosa and her mission, and learns that not everything revolves around being a whitewashed, brainwashed lunatic.

The director has managed quite the feat here – he's channelled the spirit of the first three films while turning up the intensity, making the most of an enlarged scope and keeping Tina Turner well away. Modern audiences are used to spectacle, but we can guarantee that you won't see anything else quite like this at the cinema this year. **James White**

? The film was supposed to start shooting in 2003, but was put on hold until 2009 over security concerns in Namibia.

Tomorrowland: A World Beyond

Brad Bird's latest flight of fancy

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

12A | 130 minutes

Director: Brad Bird

Cast: George Clooney, Thomas Robinson, Britt Robertson, Hugh Laurie, Raffey Cassidy, Kathryn Hahn

SO IS IT ALL ABOUT

Disneyland? Does it have anything to do with that weird box of clues on Twitter? Do we find out why George Clooney has an exploding bathtub? Err... Yes and no. The fact that you leave *Tomorrowland* with more questions than answers is sort of the whole point. Brad Bird might have already ditched live action to rejoin Pixar, but there's more ideas buzzing around his latest sci-fi opus than his old animation alumni have mustered in a decade.

We pick up the first story strand at the 1964 World's Fair. Budding inventor Frank Walker (Thomas Robinson) meets a creepy girl (Raffey Cassidy) and follows her into a secret passage that ferries him to a future metropolis – half Jules

Verne, half Apple Store. Skip to story strand number two and troubled teenager Casey (Britt Robertson) meets the same creepy girl, this time hopping back to the future via a magic badge.

By the time strand one meets strand two, we're already toddler deep in jet packs, alternate time dimensions and audio-animatronic terminator kids – not to mention story strands. Requiring a slightly higher knowledge of Tachyonic Field Technology than most average eight-year-olds possess, the last act feels more like *Interstellar* than *Escape To Witch Mountain*. Then again, as a grumpy Walker says to Casey around the mid-point, "Why do you have to keep asking so many questions? Can't you just... be amazed?"

Indeed, if you're willing to let a few things slide, *Tomorrowland* is one of the best family blockbusters in years. Bird's CG world is bursting with visual invention – a wholly



Did the movie cost even more than his wedding?

original sci-fi that's both savvy and uncynical, offering a welcome alternative to the usual dystopias that plague multiplexes. Clooney makes a great grizzled tour guide, and Hugh Laurie pops up as (spoiler alert!) an evil Englishman, but it's Robertson who really holds things together with smarts and

spunk way beyond the plot knots.

Is it a kids' film dressed up as adult sci-fi? Is it the other way around? Is it all really about Disneyland? Just shut up and be amazed. **Paul Bradshaw**

? The film has this longer title in Europe because there's a Belgian music festival called Tomorrowland.

The Age Of Adaline

Who needs Oil Of Olay?

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

12A | 112 minutes

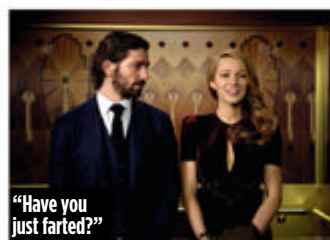
Director: Lee Toland Krieger

Cast: Blake Lively, Michiel Huisman, Kathy Baker, Amanda Crew, Harrison Ford, Ellen Burstyn

BLAKE LIVELY'S ADALINE

gets struck by magic lightning in the '40s and suddenly stops ageing. What might seem like a blessing turns into a curse about 70 years later when she finds herself a lonely old woman trapped in a 29-year-old body. Friends, family and decades come and go, but Adaline remains the same – forced into a life on the run to try and avoid all the inevitable awkward questions.

Somewhere between *The Curious Case Of Benjamin Button* on pause and a Hallmark movie with a budget, the glow of magic-realism brightens up an otherwise dull romancer – with Adaline quickly getting into a long, straight-laced love triangle with a hunky young billionaire (Michiel Huisman) and his dad (Harrison Ford), a man she



"Have you just farted?"

first met back when she was as old as she looks. It gets less interesting as the family flings get stickier, and the whole immortality thing doesn't play as big a part in the story as you might expect.

Lively's subtle, sensitive performance manages to skim off some of the froth, but director Lee Toland Krieger (*Celeste And Jesse Forever*) slathers everything in warmth and luxury – avoiding the darker corners of the *Twilight Zone* story altogether.

Yet despite the shameless eye-misting, all the glittering ball gowns, twinkly lights and good intentions are sweetly infectious. Even Harrison Ford manages to look a bit less grumpy than usual...

Paul Bradshaw

? Blake Lively had never seen an Indiana Jones film. Her husband made her watch 1-3 the night before filming began.

Moomins On The Riviera

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

U | 77 minutes

Director: Xavier Picard



THIS FIRST

big-screen adaptation of Tove Jansson's comic strip makes the incongruous move of taking the Moomins

out of their natural element of Moominvalley and placing them into a whole new environment: the French seaside resort.

While its look evocatively captures the feel of Jansson's original artwork, this Finnish/French co-production's animation might appear unsophisticated compared to the likes of *Home*.

However, it's the over-simplistic storyline that really lets it down. Much of the humour has either been lost in translation or become extremely dated, with the Moomins' naive hippo-out-of-water antics quickly wearing thin. Best suited to the very young.

Stephen Jewell

ALSO OUT

This month, three movies bit holes in the SFX reviews net and wriggled through. Hey, don't blame us, blame those slacker movie makers and their late-arriving prints! The remake of **POLTERGEIST** will be in cinemas by the time you read this: if it hasn't already sucked you inside the screen, head to <http://bit.ly/sfxreviews> to find a review. Out on 5 June: Blumhouse horror **INSIDIOUS CHAPTER 3**. Directed by the writer of the first two films, it's a prequel set before the haunting of the Lambert family. Finally, **JURASSIC WORLD**'s theme park opens for business on 11 June, with its central attraction a specially-bred hybrid dinosaur. What could possibly go wrong?



Rifles at the ready in *Jurassic World*.



Ex_Machina

A conscious effort

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 1 June (download OUT NOW!)

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD/download

Director: Alex Garland

Cast: Alicia Vikander, Domhnall Gleeson, Oscar Isaac, Sonoya Mizuno



DON'T WATCH

Ex_Machina alone.

Not because it's scary and you'll need a hand to hold. Not because it's funny and live laughter enhances the experience. Not because it'll make you feel horny and... well, actually that's a whole other can of worms...

No, you need to watch it in company because you'll need to talk to somebody about it afterwards. You could go online (though you might not want to, considering what the film has to say about search engines) but what you'll really want is a proper, full-on, talking-over-each-other "...but hang on?" discussion.

Not just about the issues raised in the film, either, but about issues with the film itself. While the script grapples with big questions of "What is consciousness?" and men's objectification of women, you may also have things to argue over concerning whether the film is feminist or misogynistic, innovative

One of the most exquisitely well-made low-budget sci-fi films ever produced

or clichéd, left wing or right wing, or atheistic propaganda.

What's beyond dispute is that *Ex_Machina* is one of the most exquisitely well-made low-budget sci-fi films ever produced. The visual artistry on-screen is stunning. Not merely in terms of aesthetics but in the way the images have a near-impressionistic quality; the lighting, production design, camerawork and effects are as instrumental in telling the story as the dialogue and the actors. Even if you don't like what the film is saying, you have to admire the way it's saying it.

Caleb Smith (Domhnall Gleeson) is a coder at an internet company who wins the chance to spend a week hanging with the company's celebrity multibillionaire CEO, Nathan Bateman (Oscar Isaac), in his isolated mountain retreat. When Caleb arrives, he discovers that he's actually going to be a part of an experiment. Nathan has created a new AI in the form of a beautiful female robot, Ava, and he wants Caleb to see if she can pass the Turing Test – in other words, when does Caleb feel he's no longer communicating with a machine programmed to react in a certain way but interacting with an independent consciousness? Complicating matters is the fact that Nathan turns out to be a not-so subtly manipulative alpha male.

In essence, the film is an expensive episode of *The Outer Limits* with pretensions. It has just three major talking roles, and is largely set in one location. It takes an idea and it explores it thoroughly. Then it grafts on a thriller plot, because that's what stops the whole thing being a philosophical



For once, the KwikFit mechanics were baffled.

exercise and turns it into a drama. The "when does a machine become human?" themes are familiar from dozens of sci-fi shows featuring android characters with a Pinocchio syndrome.

All of which may sound a dismissive description, but the power of this film is in the way it treats the material. It's a consummate low-budget film, making a virtue of its limited resources and spending the money where it shows; if you're going to make a film about a beautiful AI you'd better make the AI look good, and Ava is magnificent. Even the location of Nathan's retreat

– filmed in Norway – is breathtaking. The way the majesty of the mountains and valleys is interrupted by this piece of brutalist architecture says a lot about Nathan's psyche.

The intelligent, often witty script addresses its ideas with a depth and insight rarely seen in screen sci-fi, and even the thriller plot is inserted more elegantly than is often the case (cough – *Sunshine* – cough).

The characters are also well-crafted and excellently acted. On one level, you could dismiss the two lead men as the two sides of the male psyche – one driven by lust, the other more interested in intelligence – but



that's a broad-strokes assessment. Both Nathan and Caleb are far more complex than that, and perhaps more similar than they'd like to admit. While, on the surface, the film addresses issues concerning the definition of human consciousness – with academic references to such experiments as the Chinese Room Argument – beneath that it's a film about how men see women.

Here *Ex_Machina* enters more contentious territory. It's certainly trying to make a valid feminist-friendly point, one that's especially pertinent in a world where, overwhelmingly, men prefer their satnavs to have a female

voice. However, it also has voyeuristic shots of naked women. These are justified in a story sense (they reveal a lot about Nathan's psyche) and inserting shots of naked men just for balance would be the very definition of gratuitous. On the other hand, maybe the camera doesn't have to be quite so... lingering during these moments. Director Alex Garland may have all sorts of artistic arguments for their inclusion but it's difficult to believe that the impact of the film – the message he's trying to impart – would have suffered if they'd been a little more discreet.

But if there were a Turing Test for films – to discover if a movie was made by an intelligent, thinking director and not a brainless gestalt run by the marketing team and the accountants – *Ex_Machina* would pass with flying colours.

EXTRAS: Five short promotional pieces (one-and-a-half to four minutes long) on the story, the cast, the design, creating Ava and the Turing Test, all of which have previously been viewable online.

Dave Golder

 The art department were told they could use any high-tech designs and machinery as reference for Ava... except for robots.

MINDPROGE

Alex Garland

Writer and director
of *Ex_Machina*



Was it difficult to find a location suitable for Nathan's idyllic home?

► It was, and we only found it late in the day. We didn't have a lot of money to play with so we began looking around the Alps, but the Alps is quite chocolate-boxy. That led us to Norway and eventually we found this amazing valley. We were really lucky. Some of the other locations we were looking at... I think the film would have suffered.

What drew you to the lead trio of actors?

► I knew Domhnall very well from *Never Let Me Go* and *Dredd*. I didn't know Oscar and Alicia, but it didn't feel like a big leap of faith. They have something in common because they're both actors that really vanish. The Alicia that you see in *A Royal Affair* is fundamentally different from Ava and the Oscar from *Inside Llewyn Davis* is completely different from Nathan.

How much of Ava is visual effects?

► It depends shot by shot, but broadly speaking: hands, feet and face are practical, and increasingly everything else got swapped out. The visual effects were run by this guy called Andrew Whitehurst. What he and his team at Double Negative did was pretty remarkable. They were intent on supporting the film against all reason, really. I couldn't have asked for more from them. The film rests massively on the shoulders of the actors, but hugely on that effects team. If they'd fucked that up none of it would have worked.

Jordan Farley

Kingsman: The Secret Service

"The name's Unwin. Gary Unwin"

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 8 June

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD/download

Director: Matthew Vaughn

Cast: Colin Firth, Samuel L Jackson, Taron Egerton, Michael Caine, Mark Strong, Sophie Cookson



"It's KICK-ASS FOR

spies!" That was the not inaccurate message going into *Kingsman: The Secret Service*.

That film's creative team of Matthew Vaughn, Jane

Goldman and Mark Millar are all in place, as is the gleefully anarchic spirit. But *Kingsman* also shares its predecessor's secret strength: beneath all the snark, it has heart.

Gary "Eggsy" Unwin (Taron Egerton) is a bored kid with nothing to do except nick cars. When he finds himself behind bars he calls in a favour from his dead dad's old comrade, Harry Hart (Colin Firth). Soon, Eggsy is free and set on a new course in life: training to become a gentleman spy. Meanwhile, billionaire Valentine (Samuel L Jackson with a lisp and a taste for hip-hop clobber) is making plans for global destruction.

Kingsman doesn't hide its influences: *The Avengers*, *The Man From UNCLE* and, unavoidably, *Bond* are all in the mix. There's not a little *Harry Potter* too – for much of its

running time this is a school story about a boy plucked from poverty and given a new destiny. Despite that, Vaughn keeps the action rattling along, investing the training scenes with fatal consequences. The freefall sequence in particular is superbly tense (and makes up for some bafflingly terrible CG towards the end of the film).

Characterisation is generally strong too. Eggsy is a smartarse, but there's vulnerability there. Roxy (Sophie Cookson) is the more capable spy kid – and played neither for laughs or innuendo. It's a shame, then, that the film's final gag is so ill-judged. It aims to be a deliberately crass spin on the typical "Attempting re-entry!" Bond coda, but just comes off as old-school sexist.

Still, for the most part *Kingsman* is pure fun. And with its church fight sequence, it delivers the most gleefully enjoyable on-screen depiction of ultraviolence since *The Matrix*. Mission accomplished, Eggsy.

EXTRAS: Six-part Making Of "*Kingsman: The Secret Service* Revealed" (88 minutes)

looks at the story's transition from the comic to the big screen and examines the characters, weapons and style. There's also some behind-the-scenes photo galleries to gawp at.

Will Salmon

In Millar's original comic, Dr Arnold (Mark Hamill in the movie) is the main villain of the piece.



Lost River

Going with the flow

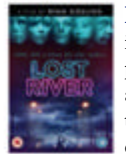
★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 1 June

2015 | 15 | DVD

Director: Ryan Gosling

Cast: Christina Hendricks, Iain De Caestecker, Matt Smith, Saoirse Ronan, Eva Mendes, Ben Mendelsohn



RYAN GOSLING

is renowned for his pretty boy looks, but it's another kind of beauty that dominates his directorial debut: the edgy glamour of decay. *Lost River* is a film full of lovingly framed shots of derelict buildings, forever dwelling on detritus and the patinas of poverty. Plonk some pouting models into the midst of any of its scenic ruins, and you'd have a *Vice* fashion shoot.

What little plot there is concerns Billy (Christina Hendricks), a single

mother living in a desolate area of Detroit. Behind on her loan payments, she risks having the home she shares with her two sons demolished. Desperate to make ends meet, she takes a job at a sinister burlesque club. Meanwhile, eldest son Bones (Iain De Caestecker) is, by collecting

copper, risking the wrath of the appropriately named Bully (Matt Smith, in roaring psychopath mode).

Though there's talk of the titular town being subject to "an evil spell", the fantasy elements are so slender as to be nigh on non-existent, more a matter of tone and style. The burlesque club, with its Grand Guignol routines, feels deeply in debt to David Lynch; the one Billy performs recalls 1960 face transplant horror *Eyes Without A Face*. It's clear from the luridly coloured lighting that Gosling is also a fan of Italian

directors like Mario Bava and Dario Argento. If nothing else, you have to admire his impeccable taste.

It's a film blessed with some beautiful imagery. But there's only so many shots of people silhouetted against purple sunsets or walking through fields of grass that you can take; after a while, no matter how pretty they are, these longeurs induce impatience. The aim was clearly to create something mythic, but the rather wobbly edifice Gosling has built creaks uncomfortably under the burden of portentousness placed upon it.

Still, *Lost River* shows great promise, even if it is frustratingly style over substance. There's no doubt Gosling has a director's eye. What we need to see next is what he could create given someone else's script – and a little more self-control.

EXTRAS: A Q&A with Gosling (40 minutes) and interviews with him, Saoirse Ronan and Matt Smith (25 minutes). **Ian Berriman**

Since Matt Smith shaved his head for the role of Bully, Steven Moffat wrote it into the script of his final *Doctor Who*.



BLU-RAY DEBUT

Society

Filthy rich

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 8 June

1989 | 18 | Dual-format Blu-ray/DVD

Director: Brian Yuzna

Cast: Billy Warlock, Devin DeVasquez, Evan Richards, Ben Meyerson, Charles Lucia



IF YOU'VE EVER THOUGHT the well-to-do act like a different species, *Society* will confirm all your worst paranoid fantasies.

Re-Animator producer Brian Yuzna's directorial debut concerns young Bill Whitney (Billy Warlock), a Beverly Hills teenager who, like Rosemary (of *Baby* fame), begins to suspect that his wealthy family and friends are hiding some terrible secret. They are. There's a reason why girls sometimes have their limbs on the wrong way round and lumps leap up under their skin...

Easily Yuzna's best film, *Society* is a bizarre, beguiling nightmare, a high-camp melding of *The Stepford Wives*, David Cronenberg and an '80s teen movie – and yet bristlingly original at the same time. Both sunny and incredibly dark, it builds its tension through an accumulation of small, twisted incidents, and then delivers one of the wildest, most bombastic final acts in the history of horror, thanks in no small part to genius special effects artist Screaming Mad George.



Of course this was before the Ferrero Rocher came out.

"This is not subtle satire" you may be thinking beforehand, but the climax barks back: "Who cares? A lack of subtlety can be magnificent." Not a film forgotten in a hurry.

EXTRAS: The newly remastered film is accompanied by a director's commentary and three interview featurettes, all new. "Governor Of Society" has Brian Yuzna confessing that he "wasn't that good a director" when he made his debut; it's a fascinating watch (17 minutes). In "The Masters Of The Hunt" cast members Billy Warlock, Devin DeVasquez, Ben Meyerson and Tim Bartelland share their (mostly) good

memories of the shoot (22 minutes) and in "The Champion Of The Shunt" (21 minutes) FX maestro Screaming Mad George explains where he drew his inspiration from (Salvador Dali figured). There's also footage of a 2014 Q&A with Yuzna and the director in conversation backstage at the film's 1989 world premiere (two minutes). Plus: a trailer, a music video and an illustrated booklet with text by critic Alan Jones. Limited edition copies feature a copy of 2003 comics sequel *Society: Party Animal*. **Russell Lewin**

Stars Warlock and DeVasquez say that it was actually their sex scene they were most nervous about.

BLU-RAY DEBUT

Thunderbirds Films

Thunderbirds are slow

Thunderbirds Are Go

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 15 June

1966 | U | Blu-ray

Director: David Lane

Cast: Sylvia Anderson, Peter Dyneley, David Graham, Shane Rimmer, Jeremy Wilkin, Matt Zimmerman

Thunderbird 6

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 15 June

1968 | U | Blu-ray

Director: David Lane

Cast: Sylvia Anderson, Peter Dyneley, David Graham, Shane Rimmer, Jeremy Wilkin, Matt Zimmerman

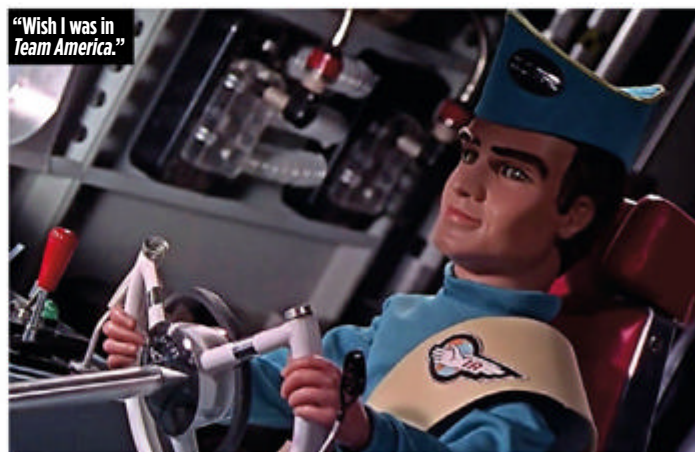
THIS PAIR OF BIG-SCREEN

Thunderbirds spin-offs both struggle to recapture the magic of the TV show.

Despite making the most of the

move to widescreen with some beautiful visuals, *Thunderbirds Are Go* feels like what it is: the plot of an ordinary TV episode stretched out over 93 minutes. Not only does the plight of the Zero X – a spaceship making the first manned mission to Mars – feel disappointingly run of the mill, it all unfolds so slowly that tension never gets a chance to build. In fact, there's some very obvious padding here, not least in a nine-minute dream sequence featuring Puppet Cliff Richard and The Puppet Shadows.

Thunderbird 6 is rather better – not least because it does something different with the TV show's format. There's a classy '60s spy movie vibe here, as Lady Penelope, Parker, Alan and Tin-Tin get caught up in a hijacking on a futuristic airship. It's still overlong, but it has a sense of fun



"Wish I was in Team America."

that its predecessor sorely lacks, and some terrific real-life aerobatics from a vintage Tiger Moth. Alas, as in *Thunderbirds Are Go*, poor Gordon gets next to nothing to do – you wouldn't be surprised if a third movie saw him turn on the other Tracys in a gritty tale of revenge.

EXTRAS: Both releases have new 15-minute piece "Gerry Anderson's Countdown To Thunderbirds", while *Thunderbirds Are Go* has two further extras new to HD: *Thunderbirds*

Making Of "Entertainment Is Go" (21 minutes) and 17 minutes of reference footage of the real Shadows performing. Other bonuses are carried over from the 2004 DVD release: commentaries (by Sylvia Anderson and the director), isolated scores, featurettes (three on each), interview snippets with Sylvia, galleries and trailers. **Richard Edwards**

The first volume of new ITV series *Thunderbirds Are Go* also gets a DVD release, on 22 June. Review next issue.



"Where is my latest coal delivery?!"

Tusk

He Is The Walrus

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 8 June

2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD/Download

Director: Kevin Smith

Cast: Michael Parks, Justin Long, Haley Joel Osment, Genesis Rodriguez, Johnny Depp, Ralph Garman



NOT TOO LONG

ago, Kevin Smith and Scott Mosier heard an apocryphal story about a man who wanted a lodger to dress up as a walrus. They improvised a film synopsis on their "SModcast" and asked if listeners wanted to see it. They did...

Podcaster Wallace (Justin Long) travels to Canada chasing a story, but ends up imprisoned by former seaman Howard Howe (Michael Parks). Howe drugs Wallace, mutilates him and stitches him into a walrus suit. Yep.

A sort of dadaist spin on *The Human Centipede*, *Tusk* is let down by muddled execution and

dislikeable characters. In Wallace's case, that's deliberate, but Ally (Genesis Rodriguez) and best pal Teddy (Haley Joel Osment) are just boring. Then there's Johnny Depp... His performance as Lapointe – an unfunny French-Canadian manhunter – is a low, even in his now wildly off-track career. A scene where he talks about his bowels seems to last for days.

Michael Parks is good value and the suit is authentically horrible, but you can't help thinking that the *idea* of *Tusk* is better than the actuality.

EXTRAS: "20 Years To *Tusk*" (24 minutes) finds Smith talking candidly about his career, while a 14-part *Making Of* (51 minutes) goes behind the scenes. The original podcast is included (30 minutes), as well as director's commentary, two deleted scenes with Smith intros, and an animated clip. **Will Salmon**

? Lapointe is, inexplicably, getting his own spin-off movie – *Yoga Hosers* will see him help two teens battle an army of monsters.



Barry knew something felt different this morning but couldn't quite put his finger on it.

The Lost World

Arthur Conan Dull

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 1 June

1960 | PG | Blu-ray/DVD

Director: Irwin Allen

Cast: Michael Rennie, Claude Rains, Jill St John, David Hedison, Richard Haydn



SIR ARTHUR

Conan Doyle's 1912 novel *The Lost World* had previously been filmed in 1925 in what was a pretty swish production for the time. This 1960 version marked the beginning of a decade of schlocky sci-fi output, mainly on the small screen, for former magazine editor Irwin Allen; his *Lost World* is exactly the sort that'd turn up in series such as *The Time Tunnel* and *Land Of The Giants*.

We're a while getting there, though. We start in London, where grumpy Professor Challenger (Claude Rains) is telling a sceptical bunch of journeymen that he's found prehistoric life in the Amazon. A

band of volunteers eventually set off for the other side of the world with him – 45 minutes in we glimpse a dinosaur. Except, this being a cheap Irwin Allen production, these "dinosaurs" are mainly magnified lizards, with plastic spikes and horns glued to them. It's a wonder that scenes where the reptiles do combat, seemingly ripping lumps out of each other, didn't attract the ire of the RSPCA.

Lumps are also evident elsewhere, notably the script. Following the protracted introduction the action unfolds in stodgy fashion, the stereotyped characters acting in entirely predictable fashion (best to look upon it as just an old-fashioned kids' adventure). It even has one of those endings where a group of characters all simultaneously laugh. Bless!

EXTRAS: None. **Russell Lewin**

? Scenes of David Hedison battling a giant spider later turned up in Irwin Allen TV series *Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea*.

ROUND-UP

THE DARKMAN TRILOGY

Release Date: OUT NOW!

1990-1999 | 18 | Blu-ray



After Sam Raimi was unable to acquire the rights to the Shadow, he created his own superhero instead: a crimefighter who's a master of disguise (thanks to artificial skin technology) and feels no pain (thanks to surgery). Liam Neeson is enjoyably over-the-top as the scientist out for revenge on the mobster who blew up his lab, disfiguring him and killing his girlfriend. In some ways a dry-run for Raimi's *Spider-Man* trilogy, *Darkman* is blessed with frenetic action and the sort of dark slapstick humour which will appeal to fans of the *Evil Dead* movies. The two DTV sequels (which recast the hero) are throwaway schlock.

DINO TIME

Release Date: 1 June

2012 | PG | DVD



In this Korean-made animated movie (also receiving a limited theatrical release), a boy and his best friend accidentally activate an egg-shaped time machine and are sent back to prehistoric times. There, they're adopted by a T-Rex voiced by Melanie Griffith, who thinks she's "hatched" the egg. Can they get back home again? Rob Schneider is well cast as a hyperactive young T-Rex, the visual style is quite cute, mums and dads should approve of the worthy messages about the importance of family, and younger kids who are dinosaur crazy should find plenty to enjoy – especially the scraps between the dinos. Inoffensive then – but not exactly Pixar standard.

JURASSIC PARK COLLECTION

Release Date: OUT NOW!

1993-2013 | PG | Blu-ray



Get warmed up for the release of *Jurassic World* on 12 June with this four-disc box set. It brings together the original 1993 Spielberg classic (We said: "a note-perfect disaster movie"), the director's follow-up *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* ("has fresh ideas, but never finds a plot meaty enough to hang them on"), Joe Johnston's *Jurassic Park III* ("Let's do it all again, with different monsters!"), and the 3D conversion released to celebrate the franchise's 20th anniversary. If you're a fan you'll already own all this, of course: the only "exciting bonus" is that the packaging has been designed to leave space for your disc of *Jurassic World*, which is terribly thoughtful of them.

NEMESIS

Release Date: OUT NOW!

1992 | 18 | Blu-ray



From the director of Jean-Claude Van Damme's *Cyborg* and the rubbish 1990 version of *Captain America* comes this cyberpunk-y B-movie about a former-LAPD cyborg. Assigned to recover stolen secrets, he discovers a plot to copy the minds of people in power into android bodies. Expect lengthy machine-gun battles, characters wearing trenchcoats and sunglasses, *Blade Runner*-esque musings about whether a machine can really feel, and the creeping feeling that if William Gibson stumbled across it airing late-night on cable he'd have his head in his hands. 101 Films have also released a four-movie *Nemesis* box set including three sequels: *Nebula*, *Time Lapse* and *Death Angel*.

12 Monkeys Season One

Plague For Today

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

Creators: Terry Matalas, Travis Fickett

Cast: Aaron Stanford, Amanda Schull, Kirk Acevedo, Barbara Sukowa, Emily Hampshire



REMAKING 12

Monkeys for TV seemed like a pointless exercise. The 20-year-old time travel film is fondly remembered, sure, but it was also so rigidly self-contained – with a beginning, middle and end (not necessarily in that order) – that no one has ever seriously mooted a sequel. Plus, there was little in the way of background mythology to expand upon. So why bother? Any television version was doomed to failure, clearly.

Well, no, as it turns out. Any worries that, robbed of director Terry Gilliam's esoteric visual flair,

Syfy's take on *12 Monkeys* would be just *The Sarah Connor Chronicles* without the Terminators or *Continuum* without the gadgets are swiftly swept aside, as the series aims instead for a hard SF version of Steven Moffat-style timey-wiminess.

The pilot episode tackles the broad strokes from the movie: as part of a ramshackle project known as Splinter, James Cole travels from a post-apocalyptic 2043 to various points in the early 20th century in an attempt to prevent the release of a deadly virus unleashed by an organisation called "the Army of the Twelve Monkeys".

After that, the show ploughs its own furrow, creating a complex new mythology. We learn more about the devastated future world, the formation of the Army of the Twelve Monkeys and the virus. There are whole new subplots and villains and time-lines. Through it all there's a



Barry wasn't sure about Premier Inn's new bed.

willingness to give time travel and its paradoxes a really good workout until, with episode 11, the show delivers a game-changer that leaves you reeling.

There are problems. Aaron Stanford, a fine character actor, is oddly bland as Cole, playing the character in a constant state of high tension that robs him of charisma. The tone and pacing is a little one-note – unrelentingly dour and frenetic; a few lighter moments might help make the characters a

little more endearing. A few of the earlier episodes sag as the extended mythology is set up.

And yeah, there are plot holes. But this is time travel. Spotting the logic gaps is all part of the fun.

EXTRAS: Three audition tapes (11 minutes); 14 webisodes (13 minutes); a couple of deleted scenes (four minutes); a gag reel (three minutes).

Dave Golder

? In episode two, Jennifer Goines (Emily Hampshire) wears the same jumper that Jeffrey Goines (Brad Pitt) wore in the film.

Nadia: The Secret Of Blue Water

Captain Nemo turns Japanese

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 22 June

1990 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

Directors: Hideaki Anno, Shinji Higuchi

Cast: Yoshino Takamori, Noriko Hidaka, Akio Ohtsuka, Kumiko Takizawa, Motomu Kiyokawa, Kikuko Inoue



THIS ANIME

steampunk epic from 1990, getting its first British release, veers between brilliance and awfulness. It

starts as a cosy-feeling comedy-adventure. A bespectacled boy inventor, Jean, encounters a beautiful black girl, Nadia, on top of the Eiffel Tower in 1889. They're hassled by comedy crooks, then by a far deadlier masked villain with world conquest in mind. Meanwhile, an operatically tragic Captain Nemo crashes into the story...

A ripping steampunk yarn from before the genre became fashionable, much of *Nadia* is supremely enjoyable. The technology ranges from the anachronistically believable (Nemo's super-modern



"Listen, I am NOT Matt Smith!"

Nautilus submarine) to the frankly loony (a giant robot crab!). The kids are engagingly awkward, especially Nadia, who's terrified by who she may really be. It's fascinating to see the show evolve, from a Studio Ghibli-style family adventure into something far more adult, angsty and Freudian.

Yet the series never loses its love of madcap silliness... which unfortunately takes over completely for a lot of this 39-part series (parts 23 to 34). These episodes get so poor that you can skip most of them (only part 31 is important to the plot). Thankfully, the last five parts are a magnificent slambang finale, which takes the show to the stars in tribute to *Space Battleship Yamato*.

EXTRAS: Clean credits and trailers.

? Captain Nemo is voiced in Japanese by Akio Otsuka, who also voiced Batou (the huge male cyborg) in *Ghost In The Shell*.

Supernatural Season Nine

The hunt goes on... and on...

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 8 June

2013-2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

Showrunner: Jeremy Carver

Cast: Jared Padalecki, Jensen Ackles, Misha Collins, Mark Sheppard, Erica Carroll, Tahmoh Penikett



THIS SEASON OF

Supernatural took so long to reach British TV screens that it must surely have shed viewers

like a demon shedding vessels along the way. So was it worth the wait? As usual, yes.

Highs this year include just about any scene containing Crowley, with the King of Hell finding himself knocked down a peg or two by those pesky Winchesters, as well as an intriguing arc-plot focusing on Dean making a dodgy deal with a fallen angel. Oh, and Felicia Day's delightful Charlie also gets to hang out with *The Wizard Of Oz*'s Dorothy in the barny "Slumber Party".

Lows include Castiel wandering about aimlessly for half a season



The new IT team rocked.

amid a dull fallen angels storyline, an off-key return for Garth, and an utterly dreadful episode named "Bloodlines" which was mooted as the pilot for a spin-off series that thankfully never happened.

Supernatural isn't quite as spunky as in the old days, true, but its wisecracks, gory deaths and endless brotherly angst are still compelling to watch, even if you feel as though you've seen most of this before.

EXTRAS: Three commentaries (with Mark Sheppard and Misha Collins lending their vocals for once), an amusing behind-the-scenes mockumentary (18 minutes), several featurettes (54 minutes), the team's Comic-Con 2013 panel (29 minutes), and a gag reel (eight minutes). **Jayne Nelson**

? The CW are still keen on having a spin-off, and showrunner Jeremy Carver says it, "continues to percolate in discussions".

The Dead Lands

Crouching Tiger In Middle-Earth

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 1 June

2015 | 15 | DVD

Director: Toa Fraser

Cast: Lawrence Makoare, James Rolleston, Te Kohu Tuhaka, Xavier Horan, Ruakura Turei, Rena Owen



AFTER THE

Hobbit, you could be forgiven for presuming that Kiwis live in an idyllic paradise populated by furry-footed folk. Director Toa Fraser dispels such images with this exhilaratingly brutal historical actioner; set in New Zealand at an unspecified time before European colonisation, it singlehandedly pioneers the subgenre of Maori martial arts movies.

With their striking mohawks and tattoos, these fearsome Maori fighters would be more at home in *Mad Max*'s post-apocalyptic environs than the Shire's genteel surrounds. Fraser is best known internationally for offbeat Edwardian comedy *Dean Spanley*, but *The Dead Lands* couldn't be more different.



Poldark was just getting ridiculous now.

The film takes its name from the otherworldly region in which main character The Warrior (Lawrence Makoare) resides, but Fraser downplays the fantastical elements, instead emphasising the importance of the spiritual side of Maori life. Makoare gives a raw, emotionally compelling performance as the cold-hearted outcast who reluctantly takes young Hongi (James Rolleston) under his wing after his family are massacred by a rival tribe.

While the subtitled dialogue is in Maori, it makes little difference, as the characters let their fists do all the talking.

EXTRAS: An edition of Maori documentary series *Waka Huia* (29 minutes, subtitled) on the making of the film. **Stephen Jewell**

Fraser worked with Mau Rakau expert James Webster to develop a unique form of the Maori martial art for the movie.

The Shadow

Who knows what evil lurks?

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

1994 | 12 | Dual format Blu-ray/DVD

Director: Russell Mulcahy

Cast: Alan Baldwin, John Lone, Penelope Ann Miller, Ian McKellen, Peter Boyle, Tim Curry



PULP MAGAZINE

avenger the Shadow was one of the key inspirations for Batman, but it's the Dark Knight who casts the true shadow here. From its gargoyled-adorned skyscrapers to faux-Danny Elfman score, it's a film shamelessly chasing the box office of Tim Burton's 1989 blockbuster.

But don't file it next to *Dick Tracy* as a misfiring early '90s Bat-wannabe. *Highlander*'s Russell Mulcahy brings idiosyncratic style and energy, revelling in the romanticised '30s trappings but also the sheer giddy joy of cinema itself. One bravura sequence hurtles us through Manhattan's canyons, the camera pursuing the Shadow's secret network of communication pipes. Elsewhere a flying knife with the malevolent face of a demon has



Frank was still scared of SARS.

the freaky charm of a Harryhausen *Sinbad* flick. Mulcahy's eye is never less than restless and imaginative.

There are glitches: Alec Baldwin's a little too coarse for the Cary Grant playboy act of the Shadow's alter ego and lines like "Psychically I'm very well endowed" have a tad too much smirk about them. But while the movie's tongue hovers in its cheek it respects the spirit of its source material. The Shadow's entrance – all swirling, mocking laughter and fists punching out of the New York mist – is so true to the pulps you can almost inhale the cheap ink and woodchip paper.

EXTRAS: A look-back featurette (24 minutes) interviews Mulcahy and various cast and crew; gallery; trailer. **Nick Setchfield**

Russell Mulcahy wanted to use Shadow villain the Voodoo Master in the sequel that never was.

Cat People

The strangest feline

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

1982 | 18 | Dual-format Blu-ray/DVD

Director: Paul Schrader

Cast: Nastassja Kinski, Malcolm McDowell, Annette O'Toole, John Heard, Ruby Dee, Ed Begley Jr



PAUL

Schrader's remake of 1942's *Cat People* is a deeply '80s cover version, trading the ambiguous shadows and whispering menace of the original for something decidedly louder, altogether less subtle.

It's not only the pulsing Giorgio Moroder synth score and sepulchral croon of the Bowie title song that puts you in mind of vintage MTV: Schrader shoots this gory tale of shapeshifting killers with all the surface sheen of the early music video era – mist, crimson filters, icy fashion shoot eroticism.

And visually there's much to savour. There are some fine make-up effects and a memorably hallucinogenic "Catvision" sequence where a barenaked Nastassja Kinski hunts neon-coloured woodland



"Hang on, I'm wearing this!"

animals. Schrader's clearly infatuated with his star, worshipping her full-lipped European smoulder in every frame, but there are times when it feels less like a love letter and more like a stalker's note.

Ultimately the glossy, arty stylings clash with the lurid schlock of it all. It's potboiler nonsense at heart – SEE! A half-naked hooker mauled by a leopard before your very eyes! – and when the film throws self-consciously '80s poses it feels like nothing so much as an episode of *Manimal* with pretensions.

EXTRAS: The DVD commentary's AWOL, but you do get interviews with Kinski, O'Toole, Heard, McDowell, Lowry, Moroder and Schrader (49 minutes), plus galleries and trailers. **Nick Setchfield**

The production team used cougars that had been dyed black, because apparently panthers are impossible to train.

Riki-Oh: The Story Of Ricky

Jailhouse Schlock

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 8 June

1991 | 18 | Dual-format Blu-ray/DVD

Director: Ngai Choi Lam

Cast: Fan Siu Wong, Fan Mei Sheng, Ho Ka Kui, Oshima Yukari



IF YOU'RE

weak-stomached, stop reading right now. Despite the fact that *Riki-Oh* is a martial arts movie, it's so violent the action often feels less like *Street Fighter* and more like *Hellraiser*. There's frequently more blood in one punch than the entire gore-geyser in *Army Of Darkness*. The squeamish will spend so much time hiding behind their hands they'll develop palm-reading skills.

The plot – in a dystopian future, our super-strong hero goes to prison for vigilante-related antics and finds he has to fight most of the inmates – is really just an excuse to link some of the most gruesomely over-the-top punch-scenes in cinema history. The violence is imaginative, varied and ridiculous:



Luis Suarez had left his mark.

in one early scene, a fighter cuts out his own intestines so he can attempt to strangle his opponent. That's the level of insanity we're dealing with.

By normal movie standards, *Riki-Oh* is about as far from perfection as an action star's haircut – it's episodic, and full of performances that Lloyd Kaufman would reject for being too cartoony – but for gore geeks and fun fanatics, it's paradise chopped into chunky pieces of flesh dripping with blood and gristle.

EXTRAS: A newly-restored HD master is the main reason to upgrade. The old DVD extras have been carried over: stuntman/critic commentary, an interview with the star, a short clip of him doing some movies, and trailers. **Sam Ashurst**

The film is weird, but the original manga is even weirder – in that, *Riki-Oh* is a descendant of Adolf Hitler.

The Strange Case Of Dr Jekyll And Miss Osbourne

Hyde and seek

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

1981 | 18 | Dual-format Blu-ray/DVD

Director: Walerian Borowczyk

Cast: Udo Kier, Marina Pierro, Patrick Magee, Howard Vernon, Clement Harari



OF ALL THE adaptations of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel, Walerian Borowczyk's

little-seen take is the most outré, with the Polish director adding the attributes he brought to films like bestiality fantasy *The Beast* – such as a terrifyingly proportioned erect penis.

In the book, about the worst that happens is a little girl being trampled underfoot. Here, we're treated to close-ups of a raped woman's bloodied crotch and queasy chat about damaged labia.

It's a film with an improvisatory feel, which despite its provocative content has some dull stretches. As



A week later his eyebrows turned up behind the sofa.

Jekyll celebrates engagement to the titular Miss Osbourne, his alter ego viciously murders representatives of the establishment like Patrick Magee's grotesque General. Their baffling inability to break out of the building means the film feels frustratingly claustrophobic, and the dinner-table dialogue is dreadfully pretentious.

It sparks into life when Udo Kier's Jekyll transforms into Gérard Zalcberg's Hyde; Zalcberg's cruel, androgynous features are striking, and he has great presence. And the transformation itself, which involves much thrashing about in a bath, is a

well-executed conjuring trick.

EXTRAS: A commentary pieced together from eight interviews; featurettes on Bernard Parmegiani, composer of the avant-garde score (10 minutes) and Borowczyk's love of early cinema (seven minutes); interviews with Udo Kier (11 minutes) and Marina Pierro (20 minutes); a "video essay" (15 minutes); a critical appreciation (33 minutes); two shorts, with accompanying intro/interview; trailer; booklet. **Ian Berriman**

Miss Osbourne shares her name with Stevenson's wife, Fanny, whose critique of his original manuscript led him to burn it.

Bad Land: Road To Fury

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD/download



DON'T BE

fooled by the *Mad Max*-invoking title – this post-apocalyptic Western (called *Young Ones* in other territories) is a world away from the highway battles of George Miller's franchise.

Ernest (Michael Shannon) lives with his family in a post-drought USA. After his mule is killed, he buys a labour robot, but it brings him into conflict with devious Flem (Nicholas Hoult).

It's a low-key, but visually striking film. The cinematography and location work are lovely. The SF elements are well integrated too, all clunky workhorse robots and hovering drones. But the main plot never fully engages, despite the best efforts of the cast: the result is a polished but ponderous riff on '70s novel *No Blade Of Grass*.

EXTRAS: None. **Will Salmon**

Darkest Day

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2015 | 15 | DVD



28 DAYS LATER...

looms large in the DNA of this zombie thriller. Amnesiac Dan wanders confused through deserted Brighton. He meets a gang of friends living in the ruins, and together they dodge the infected (fast-running, fond of violence and drooling), and trigger-happy squaddies.

Nothing you haven't seen before, then. The acting and dialogue is variable and the pacing is all over the place. It's also smeared in Horror Green – the sludgy colour grading that's all over genre flicks at the moment.

That said, it's an impressive achievement. *Darkest Day* was made for just £1,000, but you wouldn't know it. There are subtle but convincing effects, a couple of mass zombie stampedes and its locations are visually interesting.

EXTRAS: A candid Making Of and trailers. **Will Salmon**

The Haunting Of Radcliffe House

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2014 | 15 | DVD/download



THE HAUNTING

Of Radcliffe House fancies itself a classic ghost story. You can tell, because after professional fixer-upper Meg (Olivia Williams) moves her family into a creaky old mansion, the clichés and references stack up alarmingly fast, with both *Wuthering Heights* and *Dracula* getting shout-outs. But one sad-eyed ghost does not a classic make, and this tends towards moronic, not iconic.

The main irritant is Meg herself: she's one of those characters who's so determined not to acknowledge the supernatural that she ignores everything around her. And the final sting is so dopey it undermines its own sinister intentions – what self-respecting ghoul uses "petal" as a term of endearment and still expects people to be scared?

EXTRAS: A gallery. **Sarah Dobbs**

Out Of The Dark

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 22 June

2014 | 15 | DVD



A GHOSTLY FACE

appears in a window. Children's toys move of their own accord. And whispering voices suggest something sinister happened a long time ago in a young family's new home. Sound familiar? Yup, this is a cliché-ridden mess of a haunted house movie.

What's really disappointing, though, is that it pretends to be something better. Really great horror movies often have a point to make in amongst the scares, and with its story of shady American businessmen exploiting (and endangering) impoverished villagers in deepest Colombia, *Out Of The Dark* looks like it could develop into a del Toro-style socially conscious fairytale. But then it bottles it in favour of cheap CGI and a soppy ending, which is somehow even more annoying than if it hadn't tried at all.

EXTRAS: Making Of. **Sarah Dobbs**

The Man With The Iron Fists 2

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2015 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD

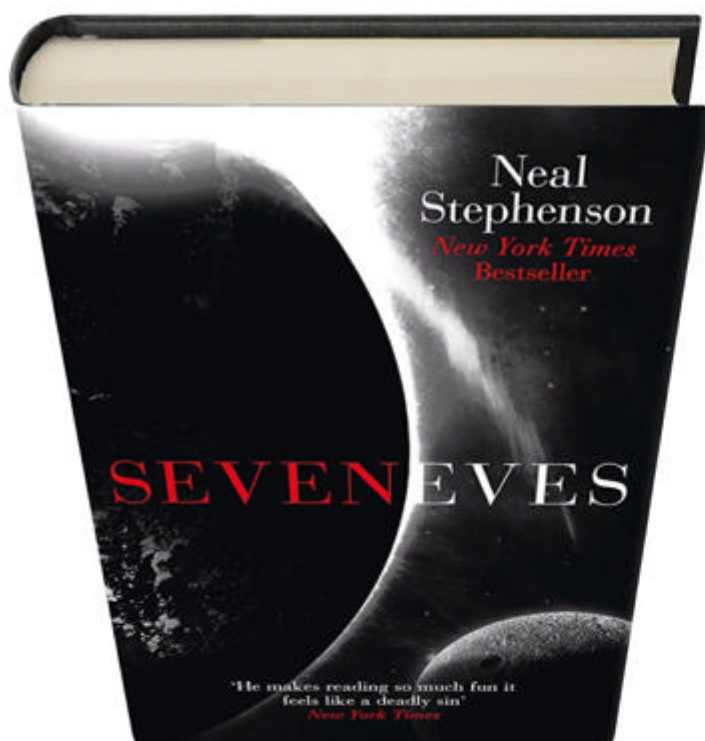


THE BEST

Shaw Brothers kung-fu movies – which rapper RZA continues to homage here – have compelling narratives enhanced by well-choreographed fights.

Sadly, this plot – RZA's iron-fisted man arrives in a mining village ruled by a cruel tyrant – is as boring as the badly-shot and choppy fights that occasionally break it up. At least the first film had Russell Crowe gulping down scenery, as well as a pre-*Guardians* Dave Bautista. Here, even RZA's barely a supporting player, with the most famous face belonging to the bloke who played the baddie in *Mortal Kombat*. *Kombat* is actually referenced, but that's not enough to distract from the sheer dullness of this DTV snorefest.

EXTRAS: Commentary; Making Of; deleted scenes. **Sam Ashurst**



Seveneves

Mothers of invention



Release Date: OUT NOW!

880 pages | Hardback/ebook
Author: Neal Stephenson
Publisher: Borough Press

HIS REPUTATION MAY REST

on subverting and challenging genre conventions, but Neal Stephenson, it would appear, has gone native. Or to put that another way, *Seveneves* is arguably the most conventional SF novel Stephenson has ever written. This may strike certain readers as bad news. After all, if a man who somehow imbued historical fiction with a science fiction vibe when he wrote his *Baroque Cycle* is doing the same as everyone else, well, what's the point of him?

To which one reply might be to begin by asking what's the point of science fiction novels that utilise familiar tropes? By now, don't we all know what to expect of books about the end of the world as we know it (so many of these of late...), colonisation of the vacuum just beyond Earth's atmosphere, war in space and terraforming?

Apparently not, because *Seveneves* is a novel that constantly delights in

playing with and confounding our expectations of what will occur in certain kinds of familiar SF stories.

Begin with the premise. The book commences with the Moon suddenly blowing up. This doesn't initially cause a calamity. Even tide tables still "pretty much work" because, to quote scientist-astronaut Ivy, "The Moon's mass is still all there... It's just spread out a little." The pieces retain the same collective centre of gravity.

What a boring non-apocalypse. Except Stephenson then offers us an alternative apocalypse for which humanity has time to prepare. As the pieces of the ex-Moon crash together, a critical mass of debris is building up. Eventually, what comes to be dubbed a "Hard Rain" of lunar debris will fall and planet Earth will no longer be blue, but an uninhabitable fireball.

Humankind has just a two-year window to save the species and some vestiges of what we like to call civilisation. In a heartbreaking detail, those who make it into space will have more than enough time left to say goodbye to those left behind, including their own children.

This makes a fine scenario for an SF novel. Moreover, it's convincingly and even vividly realised because Stephenson – who spent time working for Blue Origin, the space exploration company established by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos – has the technical chops to develop his premise, often speaking through the character of Doob, a scientist-communicator who has the unenviable job of explaining to the world how the world will end.

And yet that's only part of what Stephenson is doing here. Again and again, *Seveneves* moves forward by subverting familiar tropes. As a war in space plays out, for example, we discover (very slight spoilers ahead) why the book gets its title: eventually, there are just seven women of childbearing age left alive, a sly Shaggy God Story gag in itself.

Not that we get to follow these women's lives in too much detail. Having made us care about such characters as warrior cosmonaut Tekla, Stephenson promptly abandons them in the void. Rather than following their stories, the latter part of the book is set 5,000 years in the future, an audacious jump. The Hard Rain is in the past and the descendants of these seven eves have terraformed an alien world pockmarked by debris – our very own Earth. And then,

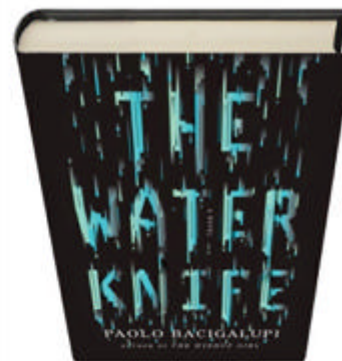
Constantly delights in playing with our expectations

because Stephenson is really on a trope roll, he tangentially tackles first contact too.

Joking aside, *Seveneves* is, ignoring a few info-dumps presumably necessary to get from A to B, a fine novel that functions both as an adventure story, and a meditation on life and how to live it. For this reason, although it's less ambitious, it invites comparisons with Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars* trilogy in the way it combines hard science with speculation about what kind of societies humankind might build once we start to live beyond the Earth's protection – right down to the granular detail of why our descendants might decide Spacebook was a really bad idea.

Jonathan Wright

Stephenson spent eight years pitching the story to TV, movie and game companies before finally just writing it as a novel.



The Water Knife

Not a drop to drink



Release Date: 28 May

384 pages | Hardback/ebook

Author: Paolo Bacigalupi

Publisher: Orbit

TO DESCRIBE PAOLO

Bacigalupi's second novel for adults as much-anticipated is an understatement. It's been more than five years since the publication of his Hugo and Nebula-winning debut, *The Windup Girl* – although he has written YA books in the meantime. Has it been worth the wait?

With some reservations, yes. Set in a near-future USA, *The Water Knife* is a tale of how different interest groups ruthlessly compete for dwindling water resources. Maintaining the unstable system provides employment for men such as Angel Velasquez, the "water knife" of the title.

The environmental theme of the novel will be familiar to anyone who's read Bacigalupi, but the tone is different. Largely eschewing the neo-cyberpunk vibe that made his name, the author instead borrows airport thriller tropes as we see how Angel's story (violently) intersects with investigative journalist Lucy Monroe and a Texan refugee, Maria Villarosa.

It's certainly exciting, with Bacigalupi proving adept at crafting showstopper setpieces. It's also a clever novel in the way it explores the actions and motivations of an antihero, Angel, without ever over-glamorising him.

Where *The Water Knife* falls down is that it doesn't seem such a radical or ambitious book as *The Windup Girl*. Nevertheless, with the tricky sophomore test passed, Bacigalupi is shaping up to be a major writer. **Jonathan Wright**

The Water Knife is set in the same world as Bacigalupi's 2006 short story "The Tamarisk Hunter": <http://bit.ly/tamastory>.

The Scarlet Gospels

Pinhead comes home

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

360 pages | Hardback/ebook

Author: Clive Barker

Publisher: St Martin's Press

HELLRAISER ICON

Pinhead, like many monsters before him, had a tortured upbringing. Bithed by a creator who underestimated his power, he was sold as a slave to a series of new guardians, each more irresponsible than the last, who weakened his potency every time they paraded him before diminishing crowds. Now the master has his hand back on the leash of his most recognisable creation, but is it too late?

Split into four distinct "Books" sandwiched by a prologue and an epilogue, *The Scarlet Gospels* reads like a twisted hybrid of *The Hellbound Heart* (the novella version of *Hellraiser*) and the *Books Of Blood*. Harry D'Amour, the mystical detective who first appeared in *Books Of Blood Volume*



Six, is our main protagonist, with the opening Book so focused on him that Pinhead devotees might find themselves feeling disappointed.

During this introductory stage, as D'Amour moves down the path taking him to the main plot (D'Amour's ghost-seeing friend gets in trouble, and he decides to help) the Cenobite is barely a presence. But then Book Two begins with a location change, and things transition into the narrative fans have always (bad) dreamed of.

Those hardcore fans will know

that Pinhead was always intended as a movie villain. Barker wrote *The Hellbound Heart* as a film pitch, then, after his directorial debut, only returned to this world to criticise the sequels, and to occasionally contribute to the Cenobite's comic-book incarnation.

Both elements are influences here. *Gospels* starts more comic-book than character-study, with D'Amour lurching from setpiece to setpiece. It occasionally reads more like Stephen King than Barker, particularly when (richly-drawn) supporting characters are introduced.

But then the narrative tantalisingly opens up into the grandest *Hellraiser* movie never made. It's exciting, vivid and brutal. At one point, Barker describes a collection of – well, let's just call them "adult toys" – as "Ranging in scale from invasive to inconceivable" and that's a good way of describing the violence he unleashes.

Fast-paced, fun, but not for the faint-hearted or prudish, Pinhead's homecoming is a definitive ending for the character, and one hell of a read. **Sam Ashurst**

Barker has been vocal in his hatred for the Hellraiser sequels (particularly Inferno and Revelations) and ignores their events here.

BULLET TIME

A BOOK IN BULLET POINTS

DOCTOR WHO: THE BIG BOOK OF LISTS

Release Date: OUT NOW!

251 pages | Paperback

Author: Cameron K McEwan

Publisher: Race Point Publishing

- A toilet book for Who fans. But is it, er, toilet?
- The author's behind website *Blogtor Who*.
- Target novelisation cover artist Andrew Skilleter provides illustrations.
- When done right (as with 1997's *The Book Of Lists* and 2013's *Who-Ology*) books like this are *hard work*, requiring a ton of research.
- This one works when the lists are concise and focused, like one of references to Agatha Christie tales in "The Unicorn And The Wasp".
- But rather a lot – like lists of "10 other scientists" or "11 lovely things about the Eleventh Doctor" (number one: "It's Matt Smith!") – feel pretty minimum-effort.
- The writing style might also grate, thanks to the use of phrases like "sniff", "#memories and "Just saying".



Resistance Is Futile

Love among the equations

★★★★★

Release Date: 28 May

341 pages | Hardback/ebook

Author: Jenny T Colgan

Publisher: Orbit

IT'S A TITLE THAT

conjures images of the Borg and heavy, *serious* hard SF, but this latest novel from Jenny T Colgan is actually very much a love story. With a heavy dose of maths, aliens and general geekery. But no cyborgs.

Connie has always stood out: an extraordinarily talented mathematician; a woman in a male-dominated industry; bright red hair... Recruited to a dream job in Cambridge with the other top academics in her field, she sets to work on a top-secret code-breaking project. Team members include her career heroine, an ex-lover and Luke, a strangely compelling maths genius who always wears the same clothes and likes to push pianos around fields. But cracking the code – a signal from space – may only make things even more complicated...



The earlier part of the tale – mathematicians socialising and calculating together, trying to break the code – is actually the most enjoyable, and the most genuine. Once the truth about the signals (and Luke) starts to come out, it never quite has the same sense of realism, as the characters set off on a mad and not entirely convincing adventure. That's combined, though, with a bittersweet love story and a race to the finish that leaves you genuinely uncertain how the story will end. Never less than entertaining, as well as wonderfully funny at times.

Rhian Drinkwater

Jenny Colgan sees The Terminator as primarily a love story: "The killer robot is really a sideline, in my opinion."

Doctor Who: City Of Death

Adams adventure adapted

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

315 pages | Hardback/ebook/audiobook

Author: James Goss

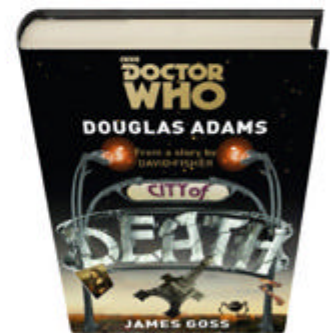
Publisher: BBC Books

BASHED OUT BY DOUGLAS

Adams over a weekend, Fourth Doctor adventure "City Of Death" is regarded by many as the classic series' best; fans have waited since 1979 for a book version; and TV writer Gareth Roberts was initially lined up to pen it. No pressure, then...

Set principally in Paris, its storyline involves an alien, "fractured in time" when his spaceship exploded, stealing the Mona Lisa to finance time-travel experiments which will undo his destruction.

Goss faithfully retains the sparkling wit for which the story is renowned but adds plenty of his own. He also provides patches for some of the story's basic absurdities – like how the one-eyed, spaghetti-faced Scaroth produced convincing human face masks centuries ago – and fleshes out the supporting



characters with backstory. Occasionally this feels like padding, but mostly it works.

The book is most interesting, though, when it draws on original scripts to insert little fragments of extra Adams (like the image of a glamorous Countess packing a Gatling gun) or provide a fresh perspective – viewed through the prism of Adams's original intentions, the episode one cliffhanger looks very different, and makes more sense.

Worth the wait? Perhaps not, but this is a damn sight better than the novelisation we'd have got in the '70s, and certainly does the story justice. **Ian Berriman**

Goss is novelising "The Pirate Planet" next. That'll leave only "Resurrection Of The Daleks" and "Revelation Of The Daleks".

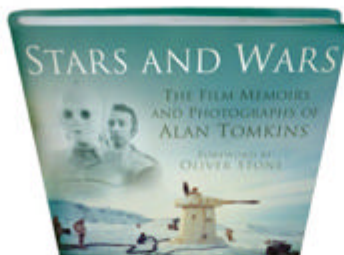
Stars And Wars

Art director draws on past experiences

★★★★★
Release Date: 1 June
167 pages | Hardback
Author: Alan Tomkins
Publisher: The History Press

IN A CAREER SPANNING 50 years, Alan Tomkins served as art director on more than 100 films, including *Lawrence Of Arabia*, *Cleopatra*, six Bonds, two Batmans and one *Star Wars* (the best one).

Of the 20 or so movies highlighted in this memoir – complete with Tomkins's own on-set photographs – around half a dozen pass the *SFX* test, including a memorable chapter on *2001: A Space Odyssey*, in which Stanley Kubrick proves to be as exacting a taskmaster as you'd expect. Indeed, it's thanks to Kubrick there are no production drawings to accompany the text, as the director ordered them all to be destroyed on the film's completion. Of his work on *The Empire Strikes Back*, meanwhile, Tomkins recalls a

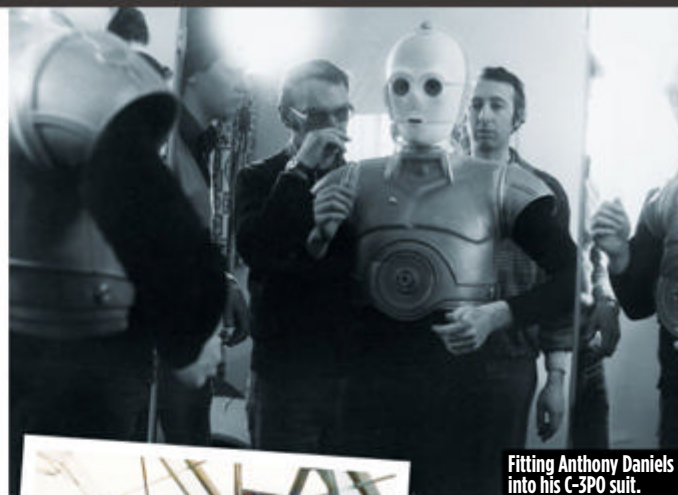


memorable trip to Norway – doubling for Hoth – where the weather was so bad they ended up shooting scenes in a snowdrift at the hotel.

Light on anything you might call gossip (in a typically devilish foreword, Oliver Stone rebukes the author for his buttoned-up Englishness), this is nevertheless an engaging, handsomely illustrated peek behind the flats of some of the most iconic movies ever made.

Paul Kirkley

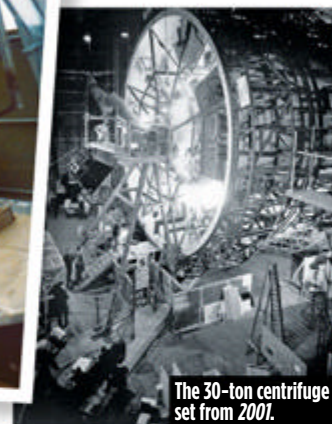
Filming Empire, a snowplough driver was bribed with vodka to collect Harrison Ford, who was trudging to the location on foot.



Fitting Anthony Daniels into his C-3PO suit.



A snowspeeder under construction in Norway.



The 30-ton centrifuge set from 2001.

The Iron Ship

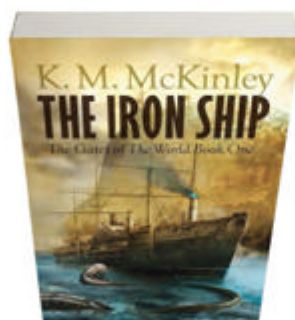
Steaming into uncharted waters

★★★★★
Release Date: OUT NOW!
672 pages | Paperback
Author: KM McKinley
Publisher: Solaris

FANTASY COMES IN MANY flavours, from the swords and sorcery of epic fantasy to the clockwork and corsets of steampunk. *The Gates Of The World* is a fantasy series that fuses these two different spices into a brand new dish. The outcome is as unusual as it is interesting, and will have fantasy fans coming back for seconds.

KM McKinley opens the series in audacious style with *The Iron Ship*. History is present in McKinley's fantasy in a way rare in the genre, at the beating heart of a world being transformed from magic to industry. The Kressind family are rich in both, an ancient clan striving to maintain their power. Their story turns on the titular Iron Ship, a vessel of magic and steam, that McKinley cleverly crafts as a symbol for both.

The Iron Ship is a baroque fantasy novel, with worldbuilding in the style of China Miéville and storytelling on



a par with Scott Lynch's *Gentlemen Bastard* novels. As is common with ambitious first efforts, where it succeeds in doing something new it sometimes falls down when it comes to the simpler things. The core story becomes lost in a festival of worldbuilding and the introduction of many characters, with McKinley trading on our expectation that these will pay off in later books. Casual readers looking only for a fantasy quest story may not come away satisfied. But tasty new dishes are a rarity in the fantasy genre, and *The Iron Ship* is well worth the time of fantasy gourmands.

Damien Walter

The titular Iron Ship was inspired by Brunel's SS Great Eastern, which was the largest ship ever built when launched in 1858.

The Singular And Extraordinary Tale Of Mirror And Goliath

Sweet enough to cause toothache

★★★★★
Release Date: 4 June
272 pages | Paperback/ebook
Author: Isabelle Bee
Publisher: Angry Robot

HOW MUCH YOU'LL LIKE

this book depends on your appetite for twee, as it's the literary equivalent of a cartoon fox in a Peter Pan collar.

At its heart is a strange but rather lovely fairytale, about a girl called Myrtle whose grandfather locks her inside a clock, and who re-emerges as Mirror, with the soul of an Egyptian princess, pursued by the King of the Underworld (who wants to eat her).

The writing style, not the story, is the real problem with the book. If you're creating modern fairytales, you need a good helping of reality to balance the magic. You get very little of that here. Even when something isn't magical, it never feels real;



almost none of the places that are mentioned, from the graveyards to the opera house in London, are actual places, and there's no decent grasp of the structure of Victorian society or how people from different strata would interact. The descriptions become tedious; whenever a new character is encountered, you're told the colour of their eyes or hair, food is always cake or meat (and fingers are always licked), and nothing is ever real enough to feel truly engaging. Whimsy is heaped on whimsy, until the whole thing suffocates under the weight of self-conscious cutesiness. **Miriam McDonald**

In the book, Dr Cherrytree has photos of souls leaving bodies. "Ghost photographs" were actually a popular Victorian novelty.

Mother Of Eden

Further up the garden path



Release Date: 4 June

480 pages | Hardback/ebook

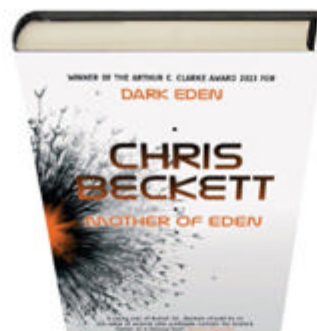
Author: Chris Beckett

Publisher: Corvus Books

CHRIS BECKETT'S 2012

novel *Dark Eden* superbly melded SF into a quasi-mythological style, following a group of humans marooned on the sunless planet of Eden (and winning the Arthur C Clarke award in the process). *Mother Of Eden* picks up the story several generations later, as young fisherwoman Starlight Brooking seeks to see more of the planet. She meets Greenstone Johnson, son of the leader of New Earth, and agrees to leave her simple existence behind and go back there with him.

There was a fascinating ambivalence at the heart of *Dark Eden* regarding its ego-driven hero, John Redlantern. This ambivalence bears sinister fruit in *Mother Of Eden*, in an excellent progression of the wider narrative. The society John founded in New Earth has become feudal and patriarchal, with history rewritten to privilege the



role of men. New Earth looks dispiritingly like Old Earth.

The book gets off to an uncertain start: even though Starlight is clearly naive and curious, her decision to go to New Earth feels rushed, her romance with Greenstone doesn't quite convince, and the reader is several steps ahead of her when it turns out that New Earth is not all she'd hoped. But when she catches up, the novel finds its groove and suddenly it's every bit as compelling as *Dark Eden* was, placing its central character over a trapdoor. Eden is building into one of the most vivid and fascinating places in modern SF.

Eddie Robson

Check out Chris Beckett's "A Special Message To People Who Don't Read SF": <http://bit.ly/specialmess>

The Damned

All's Bad On The Werewolf Front



Release Date: 28 May

352 pages | Paperback/ebook

Author: Tarn Richardson

Publisher: Duckworth Overlook

WEREWOLVES IN WORLD

War One? Given the actual horrors of the time, the idea suggests plenty of action and gore, and there is a reasonable amount of both here. However, *The Damned* fails to achieve its potential.

At first, Tarn Richardson does a nice job of working monsters into the reality of World War One, with genuinely atmospheric scenes of Tommies in the trenches encountering the results of a werewolf attack for the first time. However, it doesn't last. Enter Poldek Tacit, the alcoholic, violent, werewolf-hunting Inquisitor (who's supposed to be the hero of the piece, despite being a deeply unpleasant person), and some ridiculous conniving Cardinals. There are only two substantial female characters in the book: one a good-time girl who we first encounter airing her foot at the window, the other a sexy



nun with seemingly irresistible cleavage. It would be unfair to suggest the male characters are any less clichéd, but they are less objectified.

There are too many backstories: one for Tacit and one for the cardinals. This, on top of seeing the present through the eyes of several characters, makes the story stutter rather than flow. The whole enterprise feels horribly dated, and at least '80s writers like Shaun Hutson and Robert McCammon seemed to be having fun in their writing, whereas *The Damned* feels leaden as well as old-fashioned.

Miriam McDonald

The medieval tunnels under Arras depicted in the book do exist, and were expanded by troops from Britain and New Zealand.

WHSmith

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The Awesome

Maggie The Cliché Slayer

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

246 pages | Paperback

Author: Eva Darrows

Publisher: Ravenstone Press

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD

Maggie is a monster hunter who doesn't know how to be a normal teenager. Yeah, we've heard that one before, but *The Awesome* isn't just another *Buffy* wannabe. It's smarter than that, and more subversive; it sets itself apart from the majority of YA lit by giving its heroine a good relationship with her mother, plus a completely non-traumatic experience of losing her virginity.

The actual plot, which involves a vampiric turf war, never feels particularly urgent, but every character, down to the lowest-ranking lackey, feels fully developed thanks to the author's eye for detail. And Maggie herself, foul-mouthed and bratty though she might be, is ridiculously likeable. Hopefully this is just the beginning of her adventures.

Sarah Dobbs

“Eva Darrows” is the pen name of YA author Hillary Monahan, who writes horror under her real name.



The Fangirl's Guide To The Galaxy

Geek chic

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

208 pages | Hardback/ebook

Author: Sam Maggs

Publisher: Quirk Books

WOMEN HAVE ALWAYS

been part of fandom, but there's still a damaging cliché that “real” geeks are male and women are only here to spoil the fun. Raging against the “fake geek girl” trope, this book celebrates the joys of female fandom and provides a quick fangirl-culture reference to get everyone else up to speed.

Ranging from a look at major fandoms to cosplay links, interviews with female creators and con survival tips, *The Fangirl's Guide* covers a lot of ground. There are guides to various forms of social media, a (US) tour of conventions to try, and a section on why feminism is a Good Thing. Ideal for nerdy newbies, while seasoned geek girls will find its prose entertaining and its enthusiasm infectious. **Rhian Drinkwater**

Maggs is an associate editor for female-centric geek site *The Mary Sue*, and won the 2013 Geek Feminist Award.



Mindwalker

Control+Alt+Delete for brains

★★★★★

Release Date: 4 June

400 pages | Paperback

Author: AJ Steiger

Publisher: Neworld Publications

MINDWALKER IS YET

another Young Adult book that focuses on a teenage girl who fights an authoritarian government while being torn between two love interests. Obviously this is all as hackneyed as Hackney itself, but, thankfully, all of that plays second fiddle to what is an absolutely *cracking* central idea.

Lain is a 17-year-old “Mindwalker”, someone who can go inside a trauma victim's head and delete their worst memories, enabling them to live a happier life. It's only when she helps school outcast Steven to forget his memories of being kidnapped as a young child that Lain realises there's a massive cover-up afoot.

It's a fascinating concept with totally believable characters, all handled with intelligence and skill – roll on the sequel, *Mindstormer*.

Jayne Nelson

Brain-computer interfaces, like the ones in the book, do exist: in 2008, a monkey controlled a robot arm using its mind.



Phoenix Rising

Deliver me timbers

★★★★★

Release Date: 1 June

368 pages | Paperback

Author: Bryony Pearce

Publisher: Stripes Publishing

POST-APOCALYPTIC

pirates: how's that for an attention-grabbing idea? In a world still reeling after the supervolcano under Yellowstone National Park erupted and blocked out the sun for years, pirate ships now sail the oceans. Their crews salvage floating, post-tsunami junk; particularly wood, as it's now worth its weight in gold as fuel.

Toby, a young scallywag on the Phoenix, finds his life changed forever when he meets Ayla – the daughter of dangerous pirate Nell on the enemy ship *Banshee* – and a quest begins.

The world-building here is admirable, the characters are fun and there's plenty of derring-do on display. The writing could've been a little tighter and more dynamic, perhaps, but otherwise this is one crew we wouldn't mind sailing with again. **Jayne Nelson**

Yellowstone, one of 40 supervolcanoes around the globe, last erupted 640,000 years ago; a new boom is overdue...

REISSUES

DOCTOR WHO: ENGINES OF WAR

★★★★★

Release Date: 18 June

Author: George Mann

Publisher: BBC Books



John Hurt's un-Doctor stars in this epic, widescreen tale set during the Time War, which features space battles between swarms of “battle TARDISEs” and sleek black Dalek stealth ships. It draws heavily on the lore of 1983's “The Five Doctors”. We said: “A satisfyingly gruesome, action-packed and thrillingly fast-moving continuity-fest”.

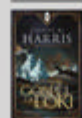
THE GOSPEL OF LOKI

★★★★★

Release Date: 11 June

Author: Joanne M Harris

Publisher: Gollancz



The *Chocolat* author retells the rise and fall of the Trickster from Norse mythology, using a first-person perspective that comes across like a bloke telling tales down the pub. We said: “The chatty, cheeky style works a treat; the light, modern tone is the perfect complement to the surreal nature of these ancient tales. Most of all, *The Gospel Of Loki* is funny. You just can't take this naughty chap seriously.”

HALF THE WORLD

★★★★★

Release Date: 18 June

Author: Joe Abercrombie

Publisher: Harper Voyager



This second book in the YA *Shattered Sea* series picks up the story some years after the events of *Half A King*. Following Thorn and Brand, a pair of wayward teenagers, it features some surprisingly tender romance. We said: “There's still a fair amount of Abercrombie's signature laugh-out-loud humour, and plenty of blood and gore, though the book doesn't feel as grim or dark as the last one.”

A VISION OF FIRE

★★★★★

Release Date: 18 June

Authors: Gillian Anderson, Jeff Rovin

Publisher: Simon & Schuster



At some point while reading Gillian Anderson's debut, you'll think, “This is like an X-File.” After an Indian ambassador escapes assassination, a psychiatrist called in to help his traumatised daughter discovers cataclysmic secrets spanning millennia... We said: “The prose is crisp and the characters are well-defined, but it reads suspiciously like a TV pilot. Not much actually happens...”

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FIRST READ
AN EXTRACT FROM A NEW BOOK

Virtues of War

by Bennett R. Coles

This thrilling new military science fiction novel sees a colonial act of rebellion threaten to escalate into all-out interstellar war.



THE AUTHOR

Bennett R. Coles served fourteen years as an officer in the Royal Canadian Navy and earned his salt on all classes of ship, from command of a small training ship, to warfare director of a powerful combatant, to bridge officer of a lumbering supply ship. He toiled as a staff officer in the War on Terror, and served two tours with the United Nations in Syria and Lebanon. He has maintained an interest in military affairs since his retirement from active service and he makes his home in Victoria, Canada, with his wife and family.

Lieutenant Katja Emmes is the operations officer for the fast-attack craft *Rapier*, engaged in a mission to rescue hostages imprisoned on the planet Cerberus.

The pods landed hard on the roof of the designated building, blasting the sentries with their thrusters. As the hatch opened and her troopers disembarked, the *tock-boom* of suppressing fire told Katja that the landing zone was not yet secure. A second later, she was out of the pod.

"Mother, Alpha-One. Touchdown, ops red."

Pause. "Mother, roger." Thomas did not sound calm.

The splattered remains of several terrorists colored the flat surface. Alpha Team and Bravo Team fanned out to secure the surrounding area, including adjoining buildings. No more shots were fired. Katja activated her quantum-field vision and looked down through the roof. Clear below. Sentries at the stairwell.

But astral troopers in armored suits didn't need stairs.

She gestured to Chang. *I see. Four. Down one floor. There. Take.*

Bravo Team advanced on the stairs, firing their explosive rounds directly into the roof of the building. The multiple blasts mixed with screams from below. Bravo Team, led by Chang, jumped down the hole and started clearing the third story.

"Alpha-One, Bravo-One," Chang said. "Clear for descent."

Katja suddenly remembered that, in her armored spacesuit, their voices couldn't be heard from the outside. Her hand gestures had been pure reflex.

"Alpha-One," she replied, leading her team down the hole, landing heavily in her suit. She still had her helmet locked down – very handy in smoke and flame – but her audio sensors let her hear what was occurring around her. The crackle of burnt plastic and metal filled the stairwell. Off to the side a loud *thump* told her Bravo Team was moving through the third story of apartments. Katja focused her quantum viewer down the next floor.

It was clear.

"Bravo-One, Alpha-One – descending to two in the clear."

"Bravo-One."

Katja led the way down the stairs and peered over her rifle at the stairwell. Quantum flux revealed no one beyond the walls, so

she moved to lead them through the door, but Hernandez put a firm hand on her armored shoulder.

She frowned, and nodded. The rest of her team took the lead. Alpha-Two and Alpha-Four burst through the door and thundered down the corridor, returning from their sweep just as Bravo Team came down the stairs.

She quantum-scanned the first floor. It was crowded with people. A group hunched ready near the stairwell, likely waiting to ambush any intruders who came that way. A second, larger group was further off to the side, and vague in the flux – most likely the hostages and their captors. Unfortunately the hostages were wearing dress uniforms, which lacked the quantum signature patches that would confirm their identities.

"Alpha-One, Alpha-Five. Suspect activity on the streets outside your building."

Katja paused. "Alpha-One, roger. Is the threat imminent?"

"Negative, but growing."

Instead of asking for more detail, she chose instead to focus on the immediate task – retrieve the hostages. She addressed her assembled troopers.

"Bravo Team will strike first to draw their attention and take out the group at the stairs. Then Alpha Team will drop into the middle of the first floor – our objective is the hostages."

Alpha Team thumped down the corridor to the mid-way point. Katja heard the explosions behind them as Bravo Team opened fire on the floor above their targets. There was a lot of shooting and shouting at that end of the building, and quantum revealed a flurry of activity below her, as more terrorists went to help in the defense of the stairs.

Katja and her team lined up their weapons and fired at the floor. Carefully placed explosive rounds struck the hard plastic and detonated in a storm of fire and smoke. Charred particles bounced harmlessly off her suit and mask, and she leaned in to look through the gap in the floor. There was room to jump.

"Go!" She gestured emphatically.

Alpha-Two and Alpha-Four dropped through the hole, and the thunder of gunfire echoed up. Katja and Hernandez were right behind.

The servos cushioned her fall, but she still winced as she hit the floor. Bullets thudded into her chest armor, and she fired off three rounds into the violent fray.

Already the entire floor was choked with dust and smoke. Katja used her quantum flux to see through the haze, and spotted a small figure in an attack position. She fired, and

saw the figure disintegrate as the round impacted flesh and exploded.

"This is Alpha-Two," Assad said in a cool voice. "Tally-ho hostages, north end."

Katja and Hernandez turned together and ran toward the north end of the building, their suits protecting them from the horror of battle. Through the chaos, they saw Assad and Jackson gathering up the hostages.

Katja did a quick survey. Five hostages. All wounded. Two critically. But alive. She even took an extra moment to survey the injuries on Jack, Breeze's boy-toy. His face was badly bruised and his nose was broken, but his limbs were intact. Based on the footage alone Katja guessed that he had internal injuries. He was pale under the caked blood, but breathing.

He stared up at her with bleary eyes.

"Hey, you're Astral Corps..."

She nodded. "And you're a pilot. Can you stand?"

He winced as he shuffled onto his knees.

"I think so."

Katja put an armored arm around his torso and lifted him gently to his feet. He winced, and leaned heavily on her.

"All units, Alpha-One. RV north end for hostage extraction. Pods, report to street level. Bravo-One, pilots."

"Bravo-One."

"Alpha-Five."

"Bravo-Five."

Switch freqs. "Mother, Alpha-One. Break away."

"Mother, roger. We're already en route – we have reports of armed insurgents closing your position."

Bravo Team thundered through the broken walls, firing back as they came. Alpha Team broke out a pair of stretchers and loaded up Jack and the other badly injured hostage, a woman in her late thirties. The remaining hostages were assigned to carry the stretchers.

"Alpha-One, Alpha-Five." It was Cohen's voice.

"There are hostiles in the streets, closing fast."

"Alpha-One." She pointed at the nearest wall.

"Make a door!"

Troopers fired. The wall exploded outward.

The heavy beams holding the second floor buckled dangerously.

"Move!"

With Bravo Team in the lead, the strike team burst out onto the street, fanning out in a circular pattern around the strike pods as they touched down.

Locals were fleeing in all directions. A truck swerved to avoid running into pedestrians and crashed into a building half a block away. Through the chaos, Katja heard the distinct sound of rifle fire.

"Bravo-One – sniper!"

Troopers opened fire in all directions. Explosions tore through the pre-fab structures. Dust and debris choked the street.

Katja hustled the hostages toward the pods.

"Cease fire! Find your targets!"

The hostages started loading up into the strike pods, but the Fleet crewmen weren't as efficient as troopers, they were injured and they were carrying stretchers. It took longer than it should, and there was more hostile fire inbound. Katja ran through the smoke to where her troopers had formed a perimeter.

Beyond them, dim figures ran in the street.

Jackson fired several rounds. Screams echoed off of the buildings.

"Cease fire!" Katja commanded. "Target hostiles only!"

She crouched as bullets whizzed by. Quantum-flux range was too limited. She switched to infrared. Dozens of warm bodies moved in frantic motion through the chaos. Mostly away from them.

But some weren't running. She zeroed in on the cool,

practiced movements of several figures on the third floor of the building to her right. They carried weapons, which weren't raised. One appeared to be speaking into a radio.

"Alpha-One – tally-ho forward spotter. Building right, third floor!" She loosed three rounds into the structure. The infrared images of the enemy were lost in the ensuing explosions. They disappeared from sight.

"Alpha-One, Mother. Report of heavies inbound from the south. Get airborne!"

Katja hesitated. Neither team could go until the hostages were loaded.

"All units, Alpha-One. Heavies from the south. Form a barrier. On me!"

The streets were crowded with civilians, some throwing rocks but the others warily holding their distance as the entire strike team formed up in a battle line south of the pods. The dust was swirling, but clearing.

The first indication she had of the threat was a glint of metal around the corner to her left.

To find out what happens next, pick up *Virtues of War*, out now from Titan Books (RRP £7.99). E-book also available. www.titanbooks.com

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Norstrilia Cordwainer Smith, 1975

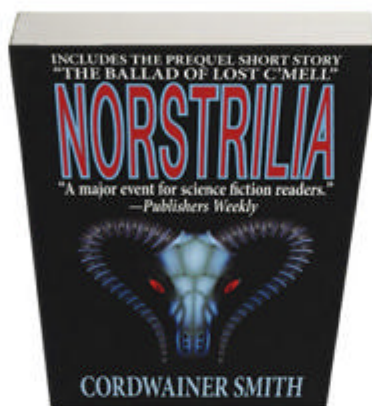
Lavie Tidhar looks at an underrated book from an author with one hell of a life story

THE STORY IS SIMPLE, SO the unnamed narrator tells us at the beginning of this novel. There was a boy who bought the planet Earth. He went there, got what he wanted, and came home again. Everything else is the details.

So begins *Norstrilia*, one of science fiction's most remarkable and undervalued novels, by one of the field's most mysterious practitioners. His pen name was Cordwainer Smith. His real name was Paul Linebarger: an American intelligence operative, the godson of founding father of the Republic of China Sun Yat-sen and a close friend of Chiang Kai-shek, an expert on psychological warfare, and adviser to both the CIA and President Kennedy. Mention his name, and science fiction writers from Alastair Reynolds to Jeff VanderMeer start singing his praises, yet his work still seems the preserve of a few, hardcore fans. He began publishing under the Smith name in 1950, with "Scanners Live In Vain", a story that was rejected by most of the SF magazines of the time, yet went on to be widely influential.

The story introduces us to the world of the Instrumentality of Mankind: a 15,000 year history of the future, a body of stories that have themselves become myths and legends in the telling. The 32 or so stories he published all take place in that context, and are filled with often gruesome, yet beautiful images. In "A Planet Named Shayol", for instance, criminals are sent to the titular planet, where they can live forever, as immobile human trees, sprouting additional body parts everywhere, which are then regularly harvested.

Norstrilia, Smith's only novel, was itself published in two parts, the first of which concerns the planet of Old North Australia. Settled by Australian farmers (and nominally headed by the Queen of England), it is home to giant, diseased sheep which produce an immortality drug called Stroon. The Norstrilians ruthlessly control population growth,



One of sci-fi's most remarkable and undervalued novels

and the hero, Rod McBan, is a young man about to face the Garden of Death – a decision whether he should live or die as he reaches adulthood. Rod survives, but when an old enemy tries to kill him, Rod turns to his only friend, an old battle computer, who manipulates the stock exchange in such a way that Rod becomes super-rich and ends up buying Old Earth itself. As everyone in the galaxy will soon be after him, Rod is sent to Earth by a renegade Lord of the Instrumentality (the wonderfully named Lord Redlady) and given the identity of a cat-man, C'Roderick.

Here, Smith returns to the underlying subject which occupies many of his stories of the Instrumentality. The underpeople are animal-derived beings

given intelligence and human features. They are an invisible underclass of servants and slaves, ruthlessly controlled, ruthlessly disposed of. In the underpeople, Smith draws clear parallels with the American civil rights movement of his time, and it is their quest for equality which drives the next part of the novel. Rod is escorted on Earth by C'Mell, a "girlygirl" working for Earthport, a 25-mile high, hourglass-shaped spaceport on Earth, yet she is also the pawn in the machinations of the underpeople-sympathising Lord Jestocost of the Instrumentality, and the secret leader of the underpeople's revolt, the Ee'telekeli, a powerful telepath and eagle-derived creature with strange powers living deep underground...

All this takes place against the Rediscovery of Man, in which humanity, having lived in a sort of drugged utopia for thousands of years, is given a modicum of crime, disease and uncertainty in which they can now play. References to other stories in Smith's mythology abound, as does the endless invention, the small details, the boundless smells and sights of Old Earth. At the novel's conclusion, Rod returns to Norstrilia, a little better, a little wiser, having donated the bulk of his money to the underpeople; yet 20 years later, now married with twin sons, he must return to the Garden of Death to see which of his children, if any, has made it through to adulthood. It is a heartbreaking ending to a marvellously inventive novel, which reminds us that as far as we'll go, the hardest thing to change would be ourselves.

Lavie Tidhar's latest novel, A Man Lies Dreaming, is on sale now.

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE!

The Rediscovery Of Man (Cordwainer Smith, 1993)
One of the two major Smith collections, in which we learn more of C'Mell, visit the planet Shayol, and learn of Norstrilia's creepy defence systems!



Version 43 (Philip Palmer, 2010)

A totally bonkers SF novel whose cyborg protagonist, sent to a distant planet, keeps uncovering terrible conspiracies only to die – and return to investigate his own murder(s).



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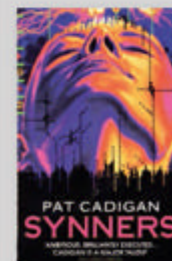
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NEXT ISSUE

Author and academic Geoff Ryman takes a look at Pat Cadigan's influential 1991 cyberpunk novel *Synners*.



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OVERVIEW

Spot your favourite?

Convergence

Crisis Of Infinite Nostalgia

★★★★★

Release Date: **OUT NOW!**

Publisher: DC Comics

Writers: Jeff King, Scott Lobdell

Artists: Carlo Pagulayan, Steven Segovia, Ethan Van Sciver



TYPICAL – YOU WAIT

ages for a comic featuring multiple mainstream superhero continuities battling each other for survival, and then two turn up at once. Both DC and Marvel are betting big on nostalgia this year with conceptually identical event series, but while we've yet to see how Marvel's blockbuster *Secret Wars* turns out, it won't have to try hard to be a better read than DC's *Convergence*.

A saga that's been brewing for a while in various DC titles, the concept underpinning *Convergence* is that Superman villain Brainiac has been hijacking cities from across time and space, bringing them together under domed habitats on a distant alien world. Multi-dimensional bad guy Telos, the living embodiment of the alien planet, has decided to pitch all 40 hijacked cities

(including multiple alternates of Metropolis and Gotham) against each other in a conflict that can have only one survivor.

Much of this conflict takes place in dozens of two-issue crossover miniseries, which have replaced the entire DC line for two months and feature a host of different past DC eras, from the pre-*Crisis On Infinite Earth* days to the more recent event comics like *Infinite Crisis*. Alternate universe stories like *Kingdom Come*, *Flashpoint* and *Red Son* also feature, but while there are occasional highlights – most notably, an excellent return for the Renee Montoya version of the Question (written by Greg Rucka) – the overall success rate is very low.

A strong central story could have bound this kind of sprawling event together, but instead the main

Showcases the worst excesses of superhero comics

Convergence eight-issue miniseries has turned out to be a hopeless mess. Four issues in, it's already borderline incomprehensible to new readers thanks to the bizarre decision to make it a direct sequel to DC's lacklustre weekly saga *Earth 2: World's End*.

Thanks to this, the main cast is made up of alternate world versions of heroes like Superman, Dick Grayson and Batman, and the scripts from Scott Lobdell and TV veteran Jeff King fail to make us care about any of them. Instead, *Convergence* is a rambling collection of overblown fights, clumsy infodumps and melodramatic speeches that showcases the worst excesses of superhero event comics.

About the only thing it has on its side is impressive visuals, as artists like Carlos Pagulayan and Steven Segovia try their best to inject energy and punch into the flaccid story. Their work gives the title a slick edge but ultimately can't compensate for the empty-headed script or the overall dearth of genuine fun. DC's upcoming slate of new titles and relaunched still holds genuine promise – it's just a pity that they've preceded it with an example of how all that promise can easily go wrong.

Saxon Bullock

Convergence was devised as a "Band-Aid" to cover the two-month process of DC Comics moving from New York to LA.



The new Lib Dem leader.

GRAPHIC NOVEL

The King In Yellow

Read it if you dare!

★★★★★

Release Date: **OUT NOW!**

Publisher: SelfMadeHero

Writer/artist: INJ Culbard



REFERENCED IN

the first season of *True Detective*, *The King In Yellow* was described by HP Lovecraft as "one of the greatest

weird tales ever written" after he first read Robert W Chambers's disturbing short story collection. Now after adapting several Lovecraft classics for SelfMadeHero, Ian Culbard has turned his attention to Chambers.

First published in 1895, the book is composed of 10 interlinked stories, and Culbard concentrates on the first four: "The Repairer Of Reputations", "The Mask", "The Yellow Sign" and "In The Court of The Dragon", which, with its hallucinatory visions of the otherworldly Yellow King himself, brings the book to an intriguing, cosmic conclusion. The quartet take place in 1890s Paris or the fictional future of a 1920s New York. With a number of characters alluded to in more than one story, they follow a familiar pattern as the unsuspecting protagonists cross paths with malevolent individuals after sampling the text of *The King In Yellow*, a fictional play that dooms anyone who reads it to a sticky end.

Culbard deftly leaves the pictures and the dialogue to tell the story, with his deceptively simple figurework meshing brilliantly with the muted colour palette to create an eerie, unsettling atmosphere that will stay with you long afterwards. Let this enthralling work cast its sinister spell over you. **Stephen Jewell**

Culbard is now working on adapts of Lovecraft's "Shadow Over Innsmouth" and "The Dreams In The Witch House".



OVERVIEW

The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl

Nutty superheroics

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Publisher: Marvel
Writer: Ryan North
Artist: Erica Henderson



MARVEL'S NEVER

been afraid to explore the kookier edges of its comic-book universe, and they don't get much kookier than Doreen Green, aka Squirrel Girl. A teenage hero with the proportional strength and speed of a squirrel (and a nifty bushy tail), she's been battling evil in her own offbeat style since 1992, and now she's finally got her own ongoing series featuring unpredictable adventures, hilarious humour and lots of squirrels.

These first four issues have a loose, engaging style as Doreen



becomes a student at Empire State University, but has to balance her normal life with unexpected battles against villains like Kraven the Hunter, Whiplash and the world-eating Galactus. Charming, self-aware and accessible, it's an all-ages superhero romp pitched as

pure comedy, and Marvel have sensibly drafted in *Adventure Time* comic writer Ryan North, who showcases exactly the right blend of wit and weirdness.

Every page is packed to bursting with jokes, and while Erica Henderson's stylised and cartoony art takes a little getting used to, it matches the ludicrous tone and pulls off a massive number of adorable sight gags.

This kind of all-out comedy doesn't always have staying power in today's comic marketplace (the recent, similarly fun *She-Hulk* run only lasted 12 issues). But while it's hard to say exactly how long *The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl* may last, it's worth treasuring every issue, as this is a gleefully nutty and thoroughly enjoyable superhero adventure.

Saxon Bullock

The original artist to draw Squirrel Girl (who also designed her first costume) was Steve Ditko, co-creator of Spider-Man.

OVERVIEW

All-New Hawkeye

On target

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Publisher: Marvel Comics
Writer: Jeff Lemire
Artist: Ramon Perez



FOLLOWING MATT

Fraction and David Aja's magnificent run on *Hawkeye* is a little bit like your punk band having to follow The

Stooges onstage.

Okay, it's not as if Jeff Lemire hasn't picked up a guitar before, or, in this case, a bow (given his successful run on *Green Arrow*) but Fraction's *Hawkeye* is an ice-cool classic of modern comics, the definition of a tough act to follow.

An "All-New" addition to the title and an #1 relaunch helps distance the book from what's come before, and in the opening few pages of the first issue, it certainly looks like a radical overhaul, with Ramon Perez's elaborate watercolour-style art

replacing the clean-line simplicity of Aja's work. But then those pages are revealed as a childhood-set flashback, as we cut to a present-day Hydra-assault and art so recognisable it's like Aja is still on the book. It's the sort of fun, meta rug-pull that *Hawkeye* fans will be familiar with.

The art isn't all that's familiar,

though. Tonally, Lemire matches Fraction's style while also introducing new elements. As *Hawkeye* progresses, flashbacks blend with present-day action in a bold – and beautiful – way. By the third issue, you realise you're reading one of the most intricately-told origin stories since the *Ms Marvel* relaunch.

This isn't as brave as that book, but it's just as clever, and almost as fun. **Sam Ashurst**

Canadian Lemire jokes that when Marvel offered him the book, their accents made him think they wanted him to do *Hockey*.



Oliver Stone film coming?

GRAPHIC NOVEL

The Light And Darkness War

War in heaven

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Publisher: Titan Books
Writer: Tom Veitch
Artist: Cam Kennedy



THIS SERIES

from the late '80s originally came out through Epic Comics, and its creators seem to have taken the

publisher's name as a challenge. The scale of the thing is staggering: Lazarus Jones, a Vietnam vet with no legs, falls into a coma and finds himself alongside his fallen comrades, his limbs restored, fighting an endless war in an afterlife dimension, using airships designed by Leonardo Da Vinci. Meanwhile, in the real world, the nephew of Nikola Tesla is on the verge of completing one of his uncle's unfinished inventions – unaware that it will turn the tide of the war...

The marriage of talent on *The Light And Darkness War* is absolutely perfect. Tom Veitch's underground comix sensibility melds social commentary with big existential themes, whilst Cam Kennedy brings his experience not only from creating surreal SF vistas for *2000 AD*, but also from drawing war action for *Commando*. The result is a startling piece of work, quite unlike any other comic.

It's not faultless – aside from Lazarus, the characterisation's a little sketchy, which prevents the reader becoming as engaged as they might be, and at times the clean line of the story gets lost underneath all the sprawl. But the book makes up for this with sheer inventiveness and ambition, and thoroughly deserves to have been brought back into print.

Eddie Robson

Veitch and Kennedy went on to collaborate on two *Star Wars* miniseries, *Dark Empire I and II*, for Dark Horse.

Mortal Kombat X

X-rated

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Reviewed on: PS4

Also available on: Xbox One, Xbox 360, Playstation 3, PC

Publisher: Warner Bros



MORTAL KOMBAT

has perfected the art of distracting from its faults rather than truly fixing them, its various entries upping the gore, expanding the story and flooding the franchise with goofy extras, all with the aim of hiding one consistent, fundamental flaw: the core fighting model has just never been up to the standard of the genre's best. *MK* has always made for a great party game, but never a truly great fighting game.

But *MKX* takes a big step up where it really matters. The core feel of the fighting is just better; more open, fluid and flowing than in *MK*'s past, with a greater sense of control and

possibility. The swathe of new characters, facilitated and necessitated by *MKX*'s time-hopping, two-decade-spanning plotline, are the freshest, most smartly realised bunch in a good long time. And that's before you even get into the Variants system. Now each character comes in three different flavours, united by their overall feel but angled differently to suit differing play-styles. It's a great

system, blowing options wide open and encouraging experimentation in matchups while grounding everything in a comfortably familiar feel.

The five-hour story mode – which embeds a multitude of fights between the majority of the cast within a giddy, knowing, and raucously fun narrative – is the sparkling highlight of the solo experience. Using smart perspective switches throughout, it's a fantastic showcase for *MK*'s absurdly rich lore and offers a surprisingly warm, endearing, and – dare we say it – affecting experience at times.

Alas, its greatness does rather



Not much silence in this library.

MKX takes a big step up where it really matters

emphasise how underwhelming the single-player options are elsewhere. Netherrealm has put its trust in online play: Faction War – a persistent, ambient multiplayer experience in which players sign up to one of five canonical cabals and earn XP for everything they do in-game – is a great idea in theory, but only time will tell whether it maintains a compelling reason for the solo player to stick around.

But let's not dwell on the peripheral negatives and unknowns, because finally, it's *Mortal Kombat*'s core that shines. With fighting this much improved and a giddy sense of genuine fun about everything it delivers, *MKX* heralds a troublesome series hitting its long-missed potential. **David Houghton**

🔍 *MKX* offers 23 playable characters by default, but four-armed menace Goro is pay-to-play DLC. Boo!

Broken Age

A universe of difference

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Reviewed on: PS4

Also on: PC, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android, PS Vita

Publisher: Double Fine



SHAY (VOICED

brilliantly by Elijah Wood) and Vella (a husky and astute Masasa Moyo) live in separate universes,

linked only by a recurring theme of over-protection and a call to adventure that leads them to question everything they thought they knew about the world around them. Separate, or so it seems – until *Broken Age* reveals that you're very much in the same situation with its dual protagonists.

Both long for danger, and when that danger inevitably arrives – given that this is resolutely a point-and-click – it's propelled more by narrative than real-time interaction. The puzzling is refreshingly modern; there are some head-scratchers in here – including a challenging, actual knot-based puzzle – but they're rare. The emphasis in *Broken Age* is much more on letting the story, the



Doesn't look that messy.

spellbinding visuals, the movie-trumping voice acting, and the sense of place do their thing, with hypnotic results.

Broken Age is capable of eliciting emotional responses way beyond the laughter that Tim Schafer's good-natured comedy writing is sure to produce. It forces you to re-evaluate, then re-evaluate that re-evaluation. Then make a talking tree throw up over a sand sculpture... Just know that you will remember how it felt to be a child for a fleeting second. You will stop and ask, "Hey, is that Wil Wheaton's voice?" (It is.) You'll get stuck at least once, but the soothing voices of Shay and Vella will melt away your exasperation. You like beautiful things, and *Broken Age* is truly beautiful. And that's all you really need to know. **Phil Iwaniuk**

🔍 The stellar voice cast also includes Double Fine's Jennifer Hale and Jack Black, along with *Adventure Time*'s Pendleton Ward.

Wolfenstein: The Old Blood

Standing tall forever

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Reviewed on: Xbox One

Also on: PC, PS4

Publisher: Bethesda



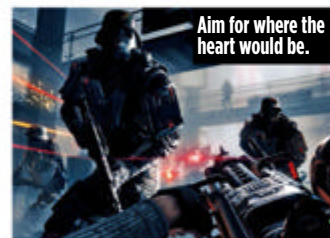
2014's

Wolfenstein: The New Order was a

globetrotting – and occasionally globe-leaving – tour de force

which took us to the Moon and back. Where could the series possibly take us now? Well, back to the castle – but if you've seen one tapestry, you've seen them all. Luckily, Machine Games know the fight for freedom should feel free, and *The Old Blood* flourishes most when it leaves those walls for breathtaking mountain views, a German village that practically glows in the setting sun, and even catacombs with a welcome *Indiana Jones* vibe.

Stealth takes more of a priority this time, with a compelling opening act that relies on perfectly timed sneaking to avoid hulking super-



Aim for where the heart would be.

grunts. That time spent clutching a humble crowbar makes the moments when you get your mitts on the big guns sweeter. There's not a dud in the bunch of *The Old Blood*'s cast either. New villain Helga von Schabbs is an inspired addition, never letting her mad search for power distract her from recommending a good wine.

Sadly, *The Old Blood* is all very familiar. Without the "Nazis won the war" concept, Machine Games struggles to spin an original yarn, pulling in many of the same weapons, systems and setpieces from the previous game. *The Old Blood* is still a great first-person shooter, but a once winning cliché cocktail is starting to look cloudy, and when you start seeing "ideas" like Nazi zombies emerging, you might wonder if it's beginning to curdle. **Tom Stone**

🔍 *The Old Blood* started life as a DLC expansion for *The New Order* before being made into a standalone game.



AUDIO ADVENTURES

Doctor Who

Pre-TV RTD goes to CD

Damaged Goods

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

115 minutes | CD/download

Publisher: Big Finish

The Well-Mannered War

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

135 minutes | CD/download

Publisher: Big Finish



Short Trips: The King Of The Dead

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

35 minutes | Download only

Publisher: Big Finish

PUBLISHED IN 1996,

towards the end of the *New Adventures* range of spin-off novels, *Damaged Goods* was the first *Doctor Who* story written by a certain Russell T Davies; now it's received the full audio adaptation treatment from Big Finish. The plot follows the Seventh Doctor and companions Roz Forrester and Chris Cwej as they arrive at a run-down London council estate in 1987, where an ancient weapon is about to be unleashed.

There are plenty of clues to where RTD would take the show, although the bleak, apocalyptic finale and edgy adult storytelling mean this bears a closer resemblance to *Torchwood*. A few shaky moments mean this isn't quite RTD at his best, but it's still a well-crafted, often powerful story.

The Well-Mannered War is an adaptation of the final *Missing Adventure* novel by future new *Who* writer Gareth Roberts. Starring the Fourth Doctor, Romana II and K-9, this joyously inventive romp sees the TARDIS arriving on a bleak planetoid where an extremely polite conflict is being fought between humans and the tortoise-like Chelonians. It's an almost note-perfect blend of comedy, drama and intricate storytelling; all Fourth Doctor fans should grab it.

Finally, the latest download-only *Short Trips* story is *The King Of The Dead*, which pitches the Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa into an unsettling mystery at an interactive theatrical event in the '80s. The enjoyable story finds some interesting angles on Nyssa's character, while Sarah Sutton does an excellent job on the narration.

Saxon Bullock

Coming soon (on 18 June): an audiobook of the novelisation of First Doctor story "The Massacre", read by Peter Purves.

SFX

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Box Of Delights

What we've been playing with this month

1 Superman Mug

Half Moon Bay | Height: 10cm | RRP: £5.99 | FPI price: £4.99 | Catalogue number: C6563

Feeling a wee bit bleak and angst after that misery-drenched *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* trailer? Put the kettle on and perk yourself up with a nice cuppa, ideally served in this fab mug. It features the cover image of the very first issue of Superman's own title from way back in 1939, drawn by legendary co-creator Joe Shuster. Note: bright colours, smiling face, optimistic vibe. Zack Snyder's already spray-painted the words "False God" on his.

2 Doctor Who Action Figures

Character Options | Height: 9.5cm | FPI price: £6.99 each | Catalogue numbers: C6726, C6729, C6730, C6731

These Wave 4 *Doctor Who* figures focus on series eight fellows. The Foretold, aka the Mummy on the Orient Express, is a good 'un, his ribcage popping out from under his bandages, and the equally sleek Cyberman's fine detail includes a prominent silvery spinal column. Curiously, the Skovox Blitz, who came over like a *Sarah Jane Adventures* cast-off on-screen, makes a perfect action figure thanks to numerous moving parts to fiddle with. Pity the Doctor, here complete with Ghostbusters-esque backpack, isn't looking much like himself - perhaps he's taken his ambition to be an anonymous caretaker a bit too far.

3 Electronic Moving Daleks

Character Options | Height: 8.5cm | RRP: £25.99 | FPI price: £22.99 | Catalogue numbers: C3263, C3264, C3265

The USP of these chaps is the way they move: not through pull-back action, or remote control, but by "gliding on a wave of sound". Basically, you flick a switch on the bottom and your Dalek starts vibrating like billy-o, emitting the sort of low buzz you'd expect from an Ann Summers product... Pop him down and he then slowly - very slowly - glides about in a circle. We know there's science involved here, but it looks like magic. As well as the regular bronze Dalek, Emperor's Guard Dalek and Dalek Sec, a battered pepperpot from "Asylum Of The Daleks" is also available.

4 TARDIS Tea Set For One

BBC | Height: 16cm | RRP: £25.99 | FPI price: £22.99 | Catalogue number: C3171

The Fifth Doctor may have described our national drink as, "a noxious infusion of oriental leaves containing a high percentage of toxic acid", but he also declared, "I rather like it"; plus, the Eleventh Doctor's recovery from regeneration was aided by the synapse-healing properties of tea vapour. So this latest entry in the *Doctor Who* Home range is entirely fitting. Neatly stacked on top of one another are a little teapot and a cup. The design has an appealing pop art simplicity that makes this attractive purely as a decorative object; it also comes in a very natty presentation box.



AVAILABLE AT:
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www.forbiddenplanet.co.uk
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FUNKO PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

5 TNG Pop Vinyl Figures

Funko | Height: 9.5cm | RRP: £9.99 each | FPI price: £8.99 each | Catalogue numbers: C4602, C4604, C4611, C4612, C4613

Entries 188-195 in the super-stylised Pop! range are eight characters from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Pictured here (from left to right) are Locutus Of Borg, a Klingon, Data, Picard and Worf; figures of Riker, La Forge and Troi are also available (what, no Wesley Crusher?!). The Klingon's our fave; you can almost sense the little fella gritting his teeth as he desperately tries to convey the nobility of a fearsome warrior, despite having an over-sized head and eyes like Smarties. Oh, the dishonour.

6 Boba Fett Retro Bag

Half Moon Bay | Width: 36.5cm | RRP: £24.99 | FPI price: £21.99 | Catalogue number: C6375

Presumably this shoulder bag will be even more "retro" after *The Force Awakens* comes out - unless, of course, the bounty hunter escapes from the Sarlacc as he did in the old Expanded Universe. The bag's big enough for a laptop and the decal is scuffed up to add to the "retro" appeal. Unfortunately, we can't get the idea that the design looks like a pair of Y-fronts out of our heads. Han Solo, Stormtrooper and Darth Vader designs are also available.

THINGS TO COME

MORE GOODIES COMING YOUR WAY

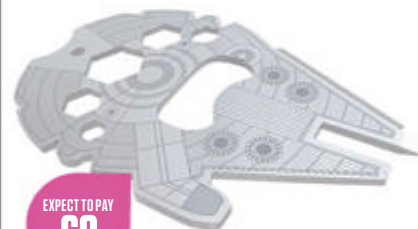


EXPECT TO PAY
£13

DALEK LAMP

ETA: SEPTEMBER

If it's reassurance for a nervous child you're after, look elsewhere, as this 15cm high *Doctor Who* lamp might well give them the heebie-jeebies. Once switched on, it glows a rather eerie-looking amber. Good luck sleeping soundly, kids... If you don't fancy laundering soiled sheets, manufacturers 50fifty are also releasing a 20cm-tall Police Box lamp.



EXPECT TO PAY
£9

MILLENNIUM FALCON MULTI-TOOL

ETA: SEPTEMBER

This ingenious pocket tool combines seven handy functions - though we're not 100% clear what all of them are. We know it can be used as a wirestripper and a screwdriver, and judging by the shape of the holes we're guessing it'll also come in handy for opening a bottle or tightening up bolts. Not sure what else... combing the nits out of Wookiee fur, maybe?



EXPECT TO PAY
£15

GHOSTBUSTERS LOGO BOTTLE OPENER

ETA: OCTOBER

This hunk of metal, however, only has one function - unless you fancy turning it into a weapon and lobbing it your enemies. (*Don't do that - Legal Ed*) It comes with magnets on the back so you can slap it on the side of your fridge, readily to hand for the moment the clock strikes beer o'clock.

FIRST READ
AN EXTRACT FROM A NEW BOOK

The Undead: The First Seven Days

by RR Haywood

RR Haywood showcases a thrilling scene in this gripping excerpt from the best-selling British episodic zombie horror series *The Undead*.



THE AUTHOR

RR Haywood is the author and creator of *The Undead* which, since its conception in 2012, has become one of the UK's bestselling zombie horror series, topping the charts on Amazon and Audible in the UK and the US. He works a full-time job in law enforcement and lives in the south of England with his four German Shepherds.

As the destruction of the zombie apocalypse continues, a small group of survivors lead a daring plan to take fuel from an oil refinery. But a stray bullet has them running for their lives...

My name is Howie. I was named after my father Howard, but it became too confusing to have two Howards, so I became Howie. I am twenty-seven years old and I work as a night manager in a supermarket.

This is my account.

We reach the entrance we came in from, Nick driving straight over the bodies of the men we shot down. He aims well, scooting straight through the ruined gate and onto the access road.

The flames grow larger, a dull roar that reaches us despite the increasing distance and the sound of the engine. Then they stop. Gone.

"Close the door," Dave orders calmly.

"Why's it stopped?" Cookey asks.

"It hasn't." His words are flat and lifeless but strike a chord in all of us. Cookey stares in horror for a second, unable to tear his eyes away from the patch of sky where the flames were.

That same patch of sky erupts as a huge fireball detonates into the air, followed a split second later by a deafening bass-filled roar.

The fireball grows larger and larger, reaching high into the sky. A solid wall of flame that seems contained and almost spherical, like a twisting tornado. The sight is awesome, mesmerising even. Then another one goes. I say another one as I have no idea what it is, but whatever is next to the fireball goes up, adding another massive explosion that rocks the ground. We all feel the vibration that shudders the vehicle, the heat wave

from the first one hits us as dry charged air blasts against the vehicle.

The second fireball just melts into the first one, creating a wider, twisting wall of flame that dances hundreds of feet into the air.

The Saxon is going flat out now with the chassis vibrating noisily, causing us to tremble and judder. Cookey hangs on tight as he and the others stare out the still open rear door. I'm hanging on for dear life too, unable to stop watching the flames scorching the sky.

They grow larger every second as more dull thuds and smaller explosions reach us. Dark solid fragments fly high into the air to go spinning off deeper into the refinery. Those fragments will be super-hot and judging from the height they reach; they'll plummet down with incredible force and cause even more damage as they land.

One of the silos goes up next, and it dwarfs the previous explosion. Making it look like a match head in comparison. A huge, thick, broiling plume of deep red and yellow flames soars up and up, the sound reaches us a second later. A sound so deep it resonates through my bones.

Another one goes, followed an instant later by another. The people in the refinery must be dead already. Nothing could survive what we're seeing. The heat would melt them in their boots, the lack of oxygen would suffocate them.

Still we climb the hill, getting higher and higher and with every metre we climb the view of the refinery opens up. The sight sickens me, for the few fires underway are tiny in relation to the whole of the site. What we saw, the teaming huge flames reaching into the sky, were just a taste of what's to come.

The others realise it too. Lani looking at me intensely, Cookey and Blowers staring at each other quietly. Only Dave seems unbothered as he watches out the front window.

"Are we far enough?" Lani asks, "Dave... are we far enough?"

He turns slowly, staring first out the back door then at her. He shakes his head, "not yet..."

Another silo goes and this time we see the detonation from

the ground upwards. A spontaneous combustion that shoots another fireball up. Another goes, then a whole row is set off one by one. Big white silos that looked perfectly clean and round spew their contents as though to destroy the sky.

Smaller fires break out, distinctly bright against the dark ground. Smoke billows as the fires spread. A tube ignites as a long spume of flame goes off like a fuse from a stick of dynamite.

It detonates something, which sets something else off and more tubes ignite, flames zipping left to right, right to left, up and down. A whole cross section of shooting fires that light the ground up like a laser display.

I try to calculate our distance. We're topped out at just over sixty miles an hour. That's roughly a mile a minute. Three, maybe four minutes since we left so maybe three or four miles distance. That sounds good but right now, staring back... it doesn't feel anywhere near enough.

Then it happens and the refinery goes up. The whole thing detonating into a supernova with a burning sun growing from the ground full of devils, demons and monsters of hell rising from the earth to screech into the sky.

A mushroom-shaped thing of living flame that grows and increases in height, girth, depth, width and every other dimension known. It must be alive, for a thing such as this cannot be anything else.

It rises higher and higher. So bright that the sky around it seems to darken and burns my retinas from looking at it. So huge that I have to crane my neck to see the top, and still it grows higher.

The shockwave spreads out in a wide circle simply making the ground flat. Everything that was there is removed. Houses, buildings, cars, trees. Nothing can withstand the blast. Then the sound comes. A furious roar of rushing wind and dragons breath that just hits in one full-on symphony of noise. The shockwave comes with the noise. A deafening dry and scorching wind. I slam the door closed and see the others get buffeted deep into the Saxon as the pressure wave hits. Everywhere is noise. Just solid noise that seems to lift the Saxon into the air, rocking and jolting us.

I'm screaming, Nick is screaming as he grips the steering wheel. Debris flies in front of us, smaller items cascade down onto the road in front of the vehicle or go flying past the windows. A hurricane of wind that sends missiles off vertically into the sky to come whizzing and spinning back to earth.

Dirty air buffets us and the blue sky is gone from view as a sea of brown and scorched greys sail all around us. Everyone is screaming but they do it silently, for nothing can penetrate the wall of noise that is suddenly and forever more our existence. This must be hell. We died in the explosion and this is it. An eternity of pressure, of noise, of screeching and knowing with every ounce of your being that we cannot survive. My ears pop repeatedly from the pressure changes in the air. My throat becomes sore from the screaming and the heat. My eyes blur from the sights I cannot stand to see.

I blink and blink, desperately trying to clear my vision. What fills my view is Dave. His face looks serene and without fear. He looks at me and smiles, a slow grin that lights his face up. His eyes tell me not to be scared for this cannot be hell, because if it was the devil would be on his knees in front of Dave praying for forgiveness.

I smile back with a slow reaction and reach out to touch Nick's shoulder. He screams with panic and fear. I grip him harder, squeezing and shaking.

He slowly turns his head to look and sees me smiling. His scream drops off as tears roll down his face. He nods slowly then faster and grins back, it changes his face. His eyes sparkle as he eases his foot from the accelerator and turns back to face the road.

Cookey and Blowers are both hanging on for dear life, Clarence has wedged himself in front of the girl we saved, I'd forgot all about her with everything going on. Lani is sat next to

her with the girl clinging on to her for dear life.

Then I twist round and see the truest wonder I have ever seen. The mushroom fireball is still raging away but diminishing and growing smaller. The sheer power of the pressured fuel has been exhausted and it's just the flammable liquids left to burn out. I still can't see past the site to the river but I can just make out the outskirts of the refinery. Already the surrounding area is a blackened wasteland of smouldering fires and twisted unidentifiable lumps.

The folly of man hits home harder than ever. The one place left that could have kept us going for many years with fuel and equipment and now it's gone. Blown to bits by a stray bullet and all the people inside incinerated.

Looking up into the blackened sky I see our future mapped out. Dark boiling clouds gathering that will be visible for many miles. The tremor alone would have been felt like an earthquake and the fallout from this will be catastrophic for years, but then no one will be here to see it. Fifty years from now the sea would have reclaimed some of the land. Plants and vegetation will grow back. Animals and birds will nest and continue the cycle of life.

Right now, looking at the sheer destruction we caused, it's almost seems a good thing that we're being culled. We'd fuck this planet up completely if we stayed.

The Undead is available on Amazon, with audio editions on Audible. www.rrhaywood.com



**The
self-published
phenomenon,
available on
Amazon
now!**

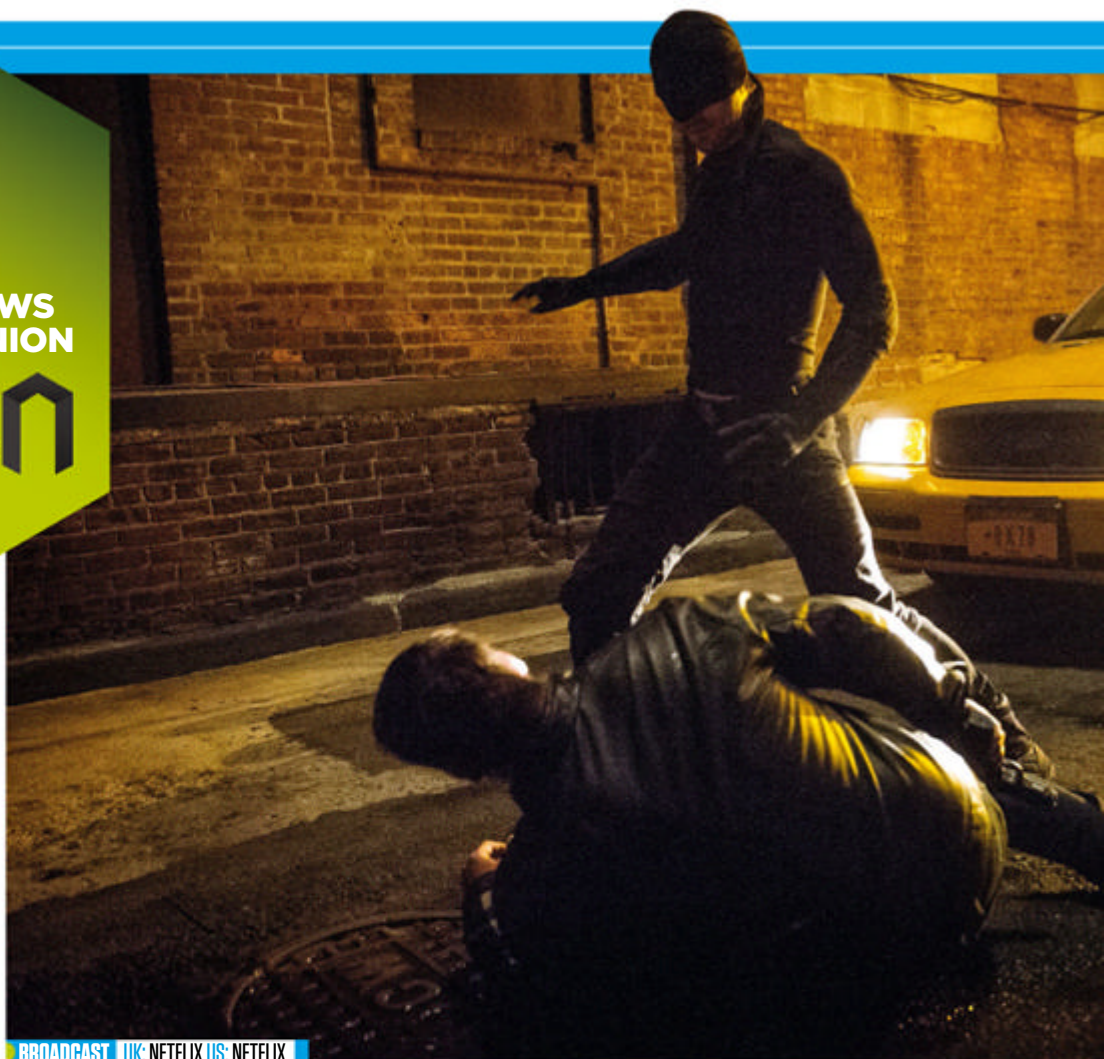


What's On

What to watch when this month



- Mondays** - *Game Of Thrones'* fifth season works towards its denouement on Sky Atlantic, *Person Of Interest* continues on Channel 5, and *Dark Matter* makes its debut on Syfy on 15 June.
- Tuesdays** - *Penny Dreadful* gets gothic on Sky Atlantic, and over on E4 the ninth season of *Supernatural* draws to a close.
- Wednesdays** - It's destination Mystic Falls as *The Vampire Diaries* continues on ITV2, while *Grimm* brings fairytale creatures to Watch.
- Thursdays** - Work out if *Wayward Pines* is *Twin Peaksy* enough for you on Fox, catch the end of *Resurrection's* second season on Watch, and head back to *Defiance* as season three kicks off on Syfy.
- Fridays** - Season two of *Agents Of SHIELD* wraps up on Channel 4.
- Saturdays** - *Tatau* and *Outlander* both conclude their first seasons (on BBC Three and Amazon Prime, respectively) on 31 May.



BROADCAST UK: NETFLIX US: NETFLIX

Daredevil

Going from black into red can be fun

SUDDENLY THE MARVEL Cinematic Universe ain't so cosy any more. Daredevil may be the Man Without Fear but he's now also the Man With The 15 Certificate – the first in the MCU.

While the Marvel movies and network TV shows are unashamedly family friendly, *Daredevil's* Netflix home means it can target those who get excited by the phrase "darker and grittier". This is as close to a small-screen version of the Nolan *Dark Knight* trilogy as you're going to get without writs flying.

After DC's ill-advised attempt to toughen up Superman in *Man Of Steel*, you have to applaud the way Marvel effortlessly creates a series that's both hard-as-nails yet still feels fits comfortably in the larger, brighter MCU. Daredevil is more than just Spider-Man with the contrast turned down, though. The show is a consummately well-crafted, binge-designed experience. It's also the first volley in a new offshoot of the MCU. While the hub of big-screen Marvel is the Avengers, the core

of this Netflix venture is the Defenders. Subsequent series of Jessica Jones, Luke Cage and Iron Fist will pave the way for a team-up and the creation of a live-action version of Marvel's "strangest" superteam. (Sadly, Doctor Strange, who's heading for the big screen, doesn't seem to be part of the mix, though Kyle Richmond, alter ego of Nighthawk, is namechecked in *Daredevil*, so he's a possibility.)

One thing's for sure. If the Jessica Jones, Luke Cage and Iron Fist series are half as good as *Daredevil*, the Netflix/Marvel team-up is going to have a rosy future. Because *Daredevil* is magnificent.

Here we have a quality crime series, evocative of '70s urban thrillers like *Taxi Driver*

BONUS FEATURES

Fashion sense: The black costume that Matt wears for most of the series is based on the 1993 comic book mini-series *Daredevil: Man Without Fear*.

Comic Connections: Fisk's associate Leland Owlsley is, in the comics universe, the supervillain known as The Owl. *Daredevil's* costume maker, Melvin Potter, becomes the Gladiator in the comics.

Dubious popularity: In its week of release, *Daredevil* was the second most internet-pirated TV show in the world, after *Game Of Thrones*, with 2.1 million downloads.

Crossovers: Rosario Dawson's Claire Temple was introduced in 1972 as a character in the Power Man comics so presumably she'll be cropping up in the Luke Cage series too.

Best Line: Bill Fisk: "Think of the man you wanna be. You sit here and you stare at that wall and you think about that. You're my son. You should be a king, not some fat little pussy."



The Dread Pirate Roberts found he quite liked New York.

with a dash of more recent shows like *The Wire* and *The Shield*. It just happens to have a masked vigilante as a protagonist. To help make sure he's not too much like Nolan's Batman, he's Catholic – so more guilt-ridden – and blind, so Bat signals are out.

What we get is gangster politics with a Marvel makeover, compellingly plotted with clever cliffhangers to encourage binge viewing. The vast cast of characters are all given a chance to shine. We are given psychological insights into motive behind even relatively minor henchmen as well as the leads. The cinematography creates a noirish Hell's Kitchen of murky shadows and languid pools of light. The fight scenes, a couple achieved in single takes, are brutal and visceral (though by episode 13, *Daredevil* having the shit kicked out of him, then getting up for one last victorious flurry of fisticuffs, is becoming one the show's self-generated clichés).

While Charlie Cox's Matt Murdock is a little bland, the rest of the cast is uniformly magnificent. Vincent D'Onofrio's brutish, cultured and emotionally-scarred Kingpin is the highlight while Elden Henson's Foggy is the biggest surprise; at first he looks like he's going to be the irritating comedy character but he turns out to be the endearing comedy character.

The final episode possibly wraps up the Kingpin plot a little bit too neat and tidily for a show which has previously avoided easy fixes and handy opportunities. And the long-awaited costume is a tad cheesy. But the devil can't have all the best tunes, can he? And he's on good song for the vast majority of this series. **Dave Golder**

MINDPROBE

Bertie Carvel

The BBC's *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* talks magic and madness

What's Strange and Norrell's relationship like?

They are entirely diametrically opposed. It's about reason versus instinct. What's brilliant about Norrell is he's a complete contradiction. Even though he's trying to organise magic, it isn't in his control. The whole drama happens because the genie gets out of the bottle. I think they end up not being so dissimilar as one thinks. They get richer as the story goes on, and you understand more about what they're doing. It's not easy to say, "Oh, this is their relationship."

How was it going mad?

Strange discovers that in order to make a magical breakthrough he needs to completely let go. That he has to go mad in order to see clearly. But the thing is, he goes on a trip, literally, to try and get mad, and does everything he can to go mad. But he's sort of going mad anyway because... there's lots of things going on.

Is there a sense of showmanship about the way they do magic?

Arguably, Norrell is the showman because his agenda is to become an influential man of the age to restore magic's reputation. The whole story happens because he shows off some magic. Strange finds that he's useless at a lot of things, and then trips over magic and discovers this prodigious talent. I suppose they're both showing off to someone. But they're not stage magicians.

What's the approach to magic?

It's a story that takes for granted that magic exists, then focuses on the people who live in that world. That's why it's credible as a drama, because you're watching credible, complete, sharply drawn, fully imagined people who are recognisably people in the same world we inhabit. I think given the popularity of fantasy stuff about magic it's not so far a stretch of the imagination. We've all seen *Harry Potter* and we've all seen *The Lord Of The Rings*. **Ian Berriman**

Jonathan Strange And Mr Norrell is currently airing on BBC One.



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Wonder what Claire's views on Scottish independence are...

Outlander

Historical sci-fi with extra depth

SEPARATING ITS DEBUT season into two halves, the historical, sci-fi epic *Outlander* returned in April with eight more episodes charting the adventures of time-traveller Claire Beauchamp and her Scottish clansman protector, Jamie Fraser. Finally committed to staying in 1743 because of her love for Jamie, Claire faces acclimatising to a male-dominated society that continues to grate on her "modern" 1945 sensibilities. She has to suffer marital discipline, Black Jack Randall's (Tobias Menzies) continued masochistic assaults, and even the threat of burning at the stake. But for all the thematic ugliness, there's arguably not a more handsome television series right now than *Outlander* – and that includes its cast.

Thankfully, the darkness of the era and some of author Diana Gabaldon's most unpleasant setpieces are tempered by the evolving relationships of Claire, Jamie, his extended family, and Claire's witchy friend, Geillis Duncan. Executive producer Ronald D Moore scores points for doing what he needs to tell his version of Gabaldon's story, such as changing up the first-person point of view in "The Reckoning", so we get inside Jamie's head. The device makes him less of a fairytale

prince and more of a well-rounded man of his times (albeit a progressive one) struggling with his own failures and a stubbornness that rivals his new wife's.

The genre part of the show also comes back out to play when Claire and Geillis are accused of witchcraft by the suspicious community of Castle Leoch. Moore addresses the perils of superstition and the damage that Claire inadvertently unleashes when she tries to reverse centuries' old beliefs. There's also quite a twist that blows open the randomness of Claire travelling back in time. It leaves the audience pondering in the best way, and doesn't pull focus from the character moments the show does so well. Other episodes feature highlights such as Simon Callow as the Duke of Sandringham, who illustrates the slippery political slope of English/Scottish relations.

By exploring the brutality of the time and the ramifications of oppression (political, sexual and gender-based) via the characters' poignant points of view, *Outlander* is proving to be a refreshing, intelligent, genre offering.

Tara Bennett

BONUS FEATURES

- **Behind The Scenes:** *Outlander* is executive produced by two *Star Trek* franchise heavyweights: Ronald D Moore and Ira Steven Behr.
- **Star Turn:** There's a special twinkle in the performance of Lotte Verbeek as mystical charmer Geillis Duncan. Her arc ends in a great reveal that makes her performance even more delicious.
- **Locations:** *Outlander* is shot

on location in Scotland. Castle Leoch is actually Doune Castle in Perthshire and Lallybroch is Midhope Castle near Edinburgh.

- **It's Wossisname!** Actor Graham McTavish is a genre vet known for voicing Loki in the *Avengers* animated series, tons of videogame characters, and for playing Dwalin the Dwarf in the *Hobbit* films.
- **Best Line:** Jamie: "Jenny, will you please turn around while I try to get out before my cock snaps off?!"

YOU HAVE BEEN WATCHING... THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO

SFX Facebook followers pass judgement on the Gerry Anderson reboot

■ The CGI looks great and it's a good update. Minor quibbles: it's a shame the episodes are so short and scenes aren't allowed to stretch the tolerance of the ADHD generation. **Paolo Bianco**

■ It needed updating for a new audience and I think they've done a great job. I think Gerry would have approved. **Jenny Davies**

■ Not deep enough storyline for me but it's for a younger audience, so it's fine, really. **Nicolas Bannister**

■ It'll never be the original, but judging it on its own merits it's thoroughly enjoyable – though as per *Captain Scarlet* ITV have chosen to bury it instead of putting in a more suitable slot on their main channel. **John Porter**

■ A cracking update that balances the nostalgia of the old show for us oldies, whilst appealing to a younger generation. **Andy P Meakin**

■ I miss random real hands flicking a switch. **Adam Windsor**

■ It's a clever update with enough touches to be a great homage – the modular Mole was brilliant! **Sara Dodd**

■ My biggest issue is the Tracy brothers themselves. Apart from Scott I'm not really liking the others. **Kirsty Leanne**

■ Turned it off after 10 minutes. It was like *Challenge Anneka* with three rescues in five minutes. **Stephen CWLL**

■ The puppets were less wooden! **Brenda Parker**

■ It's a great update. The missing

Jeff storyline gives great scope for development, and having John (so underused in the original show) as the head of the team while in space is a brilliant idea. **Jodie Portugal**

■ It stands respectfully on the shoulders of the original. I'd even go so far to say it even exceeds some aspects of classic *Thunderbirds*. **Andy Kinnear**





BROADCAST UK: AVAILABLE ON NETFLIX US: AIRED ON A&E

The Returned

Sometimes they come back... with American accents

THERE ARE TIMES DURING THE first couple of episodes of this US adaptation of French supernatural series *Les Revenants* when it feels less like a remake and more like a cover version. This perception is reinforced by the fact that, if you didn't check on IMDb, you'd swear they'd cast at least two of the actors from the original show as the same characters: the US

Camille and Simon are spookily similar to the Gallic counterparts.

You know, however, it's not going to last. The French show was consummate Euro-weird. Its story of an isolated town in the mountains where the dead are returning and causing all sorts of problems for the living was told in meandering and enigmatic fashion, embracing such concepts alien to mainstream

US audiences as *longueurs* and characters whose emotions you could never fully read. So by episode six the US version has become the extended remix, adding story beats and itching to over-explain everything.

Its main arsenal in this respect is "the flashback". Showrunner Carlton Cuse is no stranger to "the flashback", having been a prime mover on *Lost*. Admittedly, *Lost* was hardly a show renowned for its answers, so possibly Cuse seemed like a good choice. But while *Lost*'s plot threads may have been left dangling, the show had an almost pathological obsession with justifying its characters' actions in the present through flashbacks. The US *Returned* is the same. Decisions have to be driven by a past trauma. So elements that in the original were only intriguingly suggested or hinted at, are now made thuddingly clear, while some character dynamics have been altered to be more straightforward.

The result is a show that's best viewed if you've never seen the original, with no preconceptions. Because within its US TV parameters, it's actually rather good and much better than the dreary, thematically similar *Resurrection*. Great locations, creepy direction, excellent acting, plenty of shocks and twists.

For people who don't like reading their TV, it's not a bad alternative. **Dave Golder**

BONUS FEATURES

- **Les Différences:** Showrunner Carlton Cuse exclusively revealed in a *Variety* interview, "We definitely smoke a lot less cigarettes in the American version."
- **Treading Its Own Path:** If the show receives a second season order, it will have no story connection to the second season of *Les Revenants*.
- **Abandoned:** At one point *Clocking Off* and *Shameless* creator Paul Abbott was developing an English version of *The Returned* but the project was abandoned.
- **Star Turn:** Michelle Forbes (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *True Blood*) is spookily magnificent as the formerly dead Helen Goddard, stealing every scene she's in.
- **Best Lines:** Julie: "How do you know if you're dead?" Helen: "There's only one way to find out."

BROADCAST UK: CURRENTLY UNAVAILABLE IN THE UK US: AVAILABLE ON YAHOO SCREEN

Other Space

Stars and gripes

DESPITE ITS ON-AGAIN, OFF-again love affair with science fiction drama and adventure, America has been less willing to embrace the concept of genre comedy. Yet with his experience working on the American version of *The Office*, *Bridesmaids* director Paul Feig would seem to be the ideal choice to merge the awkward, nervy energy of that show with a funny homage to sci-fi tropes.

He actually pitched *Other Space* to networks years ago, but disagreements over shooting style and tone meant the embryonic idea was floating in contractual limbo until around 2013. Now Feig has headed online with Yahoo to bring the show to life. Set in 2105, it finds a



young, inexperienced and often whiny crew piloting the Universal Mapping Project ship called *Cruiser* when they're sucked into a different universe and must figure out how to survive: yes, it's essentially a silly take on the idea explored different ways by many stories, including *Star Trek: Voyager*.

We're introduced to Captain Stewart Lipinski (Karan Soni), his older sister/first officer Karen (Bess Rous) and the various

BONUS FEATURES

- **Inspirational:** Feig has cited the likes of UK shows such as *Red Dwarf* and *Hyperdrive* as influences on the series, along with his long-established love for *Mystery Science Theater 3000*.
- **Special Effects:** While the sets might be cheap, the stylish VFX come from Zoic Studios, the people behind *Firefly*, *Battlestar Galactica* and many more series.
- **Deja Vu:** Though Feig says *Other Space* isn't a parody of science fiction tropes, it opens with a homage to *Star Trek*'s Kobayashi Maru simulator scenes.
- **Best Line:** ART: "Robots are only good for three things. Cheap labour, remote bombing and... off the beaten path sex stuff."

oddballs, computers and others that make up the crew. The dynamics are familiar – a team of misfits who must somehow work together in a life-threatening situation and the ways in which they rub each other up the wrong way. It doesn't always work, as Lipinski and the rest are often more annoying than amusing with their various personality quirks. But Feig and co have a good handle on making their foibles relatable, and while the science fiction stuff can be little sidelined, there's good value to be had, particularly from sarcastic robot ART (Trace Beaulieu) and laidback engineer Zalian (Joel

Hodgson), veterans of blending genres from *Mystery Science Theater*. And, at eight half-hour-long episodes, this is more of a light binge than a long slog. **James White**

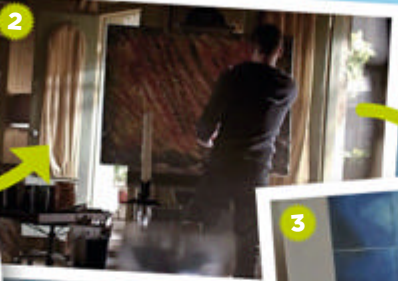


SPURIOUS AWARDS

Celebrating the silliest moments from the month in TV

1 ART SCAM OF THE MONTH

If you wondered where Vanessa in *Daredevil* sources her avant garde artwork, then...



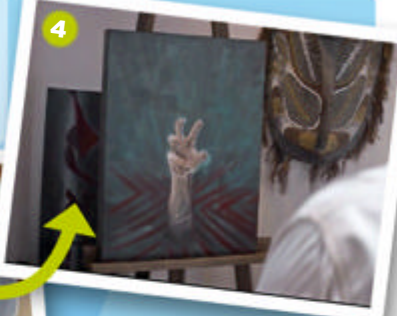
2 ART SCAM OF THE MONTH II

...*The Originals* gave us the answer. Klaus seems to have changed his style somewhat.



3 ART SCAM OF THE MONTH III

Meanwhile, the Winships in *The Returned* are clearly some of Vanessa's keenest customers.



4 ART SCAM OF THE MONTH IV

However, Aumea's oily boyfriend in *Tatau* was gutted when Vanessa sent him a rejection letter for his submission, dismissing it as "1970s heavy metal album art".

5 NEXT WEEK TRAILER OF THE MONTH

When an episode of *Grimm* ended with a Hexenbiest learning she was pregnant with Nick's baby, the next week trailer momentarily showed sitcom style scenes of heavenly domestic bliss until said Hexenbiest interrupted to announce, "Like that's gonna happen!" Classic.



6 UNEXPECTED GUEST STAR OF THE MONTH

Good grief. For a moment there we could have sworn Chief O'Hara from '60s *Batman* had turned up in *Gotham*, but it was just an incredible looky-looky.

7 DATING ADVICE OF THE MONTH

"What's he got that I haven't?" moaned Kyle in *Tatau*. "Chlamydia," replies mate Budgie before correcting himself. "No, the other one, charisma." We're not sure he knew the difference.

8 HAUNTINGLY FAMILIAR AD OF THE MONTH

Homes For Britain clearly think the housing problem can be solved by giving everybody a *Cabin In The Wood*.



9 HIDEOUS PHRASE OF THE MONTH

The Vampire Diaries actually went there - it coined the phrase "witcheries". It's the thin end of a stick that leads to "werebies" and "zomzards".

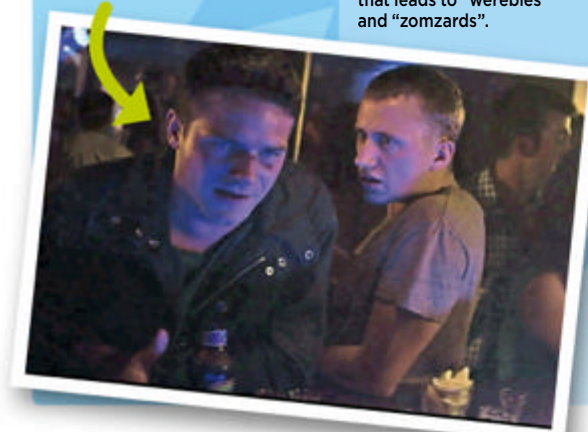
10 HAPPY GEEK OF THE MONTH

This is the most convincing piece of geek acting on TV ever. *The Flash*'s Cisco deserves an Oscar.



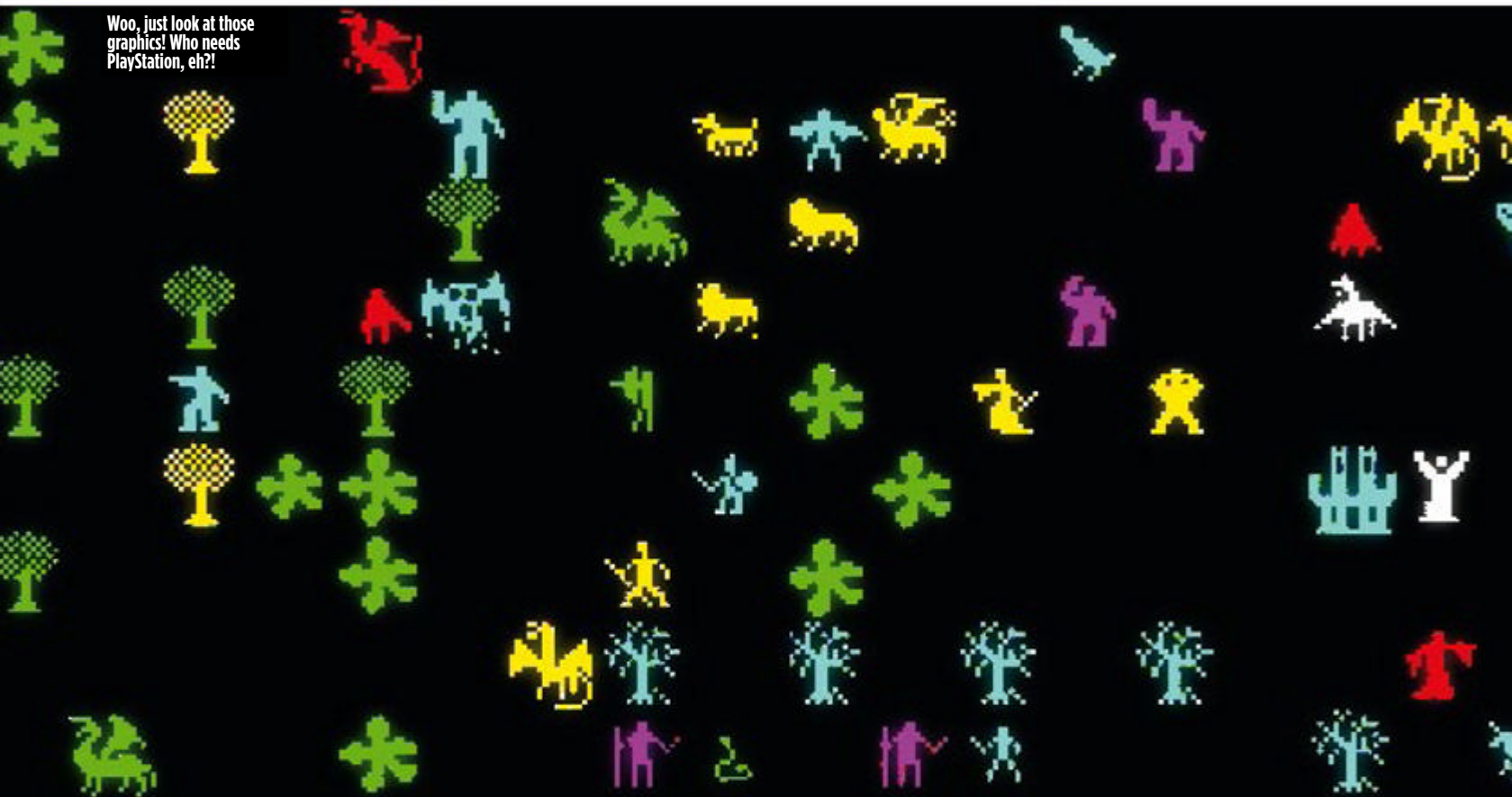
11 REMAKE OF THE MONTH

In case you missed it at 8am, *Thunderbirds Are Go* actually remade a classic *Thunderbirds* episode, "Trapped In The Sky". Shame it wasn't the one with the giant alligators.



Chaos

Woo, just look at those graphics! Who needs PlayStation, eh?!



ALEX COX, OPERATIONS ED

I was five or six. The playground, when not embroiled in games of tag, would devolve into argument: He-Man or ThunderCats? Monster Munch or Space Raiders? And, most importantly, ZX Spectrum or C64? The answer, of course, is Spectrum – shut up, it is. And the reason is *Chaos*.

Up to eight flimsy wizards, personalised with hilariously puerile monikers, enter the battlefield. Bum, Poo et al cast spells – everything from vampires and dragons to castles and creeping waves of slime – in an attempt to make the other wizards explode. If you've got seven friends, you can all crowd around your Speccy and play an epic battle turn-by-turn. But you haven't got seven friends, have you? Or one friend. Your dad might play. Once. Just me?

Anyway, *Chaos*. Those spell slingers are also masters of deception. You might have a 30% chance of popping out a big scary Golden Dragon but you're free to cast an illusionary version with 100% success. This puts the emphasis on your

opponents; will they sacrifice their spell-casting this turn to "disbelieve" your wobbly abomination? In my teeth-grinding experience, yes they bloody well will, and your otherwise unstoppable beast will disappear into nothingness, your valuable spell wasted forever.

See, *Chaos* is a game of hidden information. You're never given explicit information about the remaining health of your bear, pegasus or even your own character. Every hit you or your army takes could be its last. And you never know what the other wizards have up their sleeves; with each spellbook limited and randomised, and new spells only available if someone is nice enough to cast a magical forest, you may well be screwed before you even begin.

It is utterly unfair and extremely silly, but *Chaos* is one of the rare games from its era which is still eminently playable. It doesn't even need to exploit the untold power of the Speccy's vastly superior graphics and sound (ahem); monochrome sprites on a black background do the job because the game itself is so epic. The Spectrum might have been surpassed in the stupid eyes of the public, but *Chaos* truly is eternal. 

FACT ATTACK!

- *Chaos* was inspired by early Games Workshop board game *Warlock*.
- Creator Julian Gollop has stayed in the games industry, most recently Kickstarting a modern remake, *Chaos Reborn*.
- There's a hidden spell, Turmoil, which moves everything on the board to a new location. It's only available by hanging out in a magic wood, and it's only in one out of 64 games.
- If you know how to wield your gooey blobs, there's a way to make illusionary creatures real. We won't spoil it, though. It's clearly cheating, Dad.

SEE YOU NEXT MONTH! 24 JUNE 2015 DETAILS ON PAGE 29

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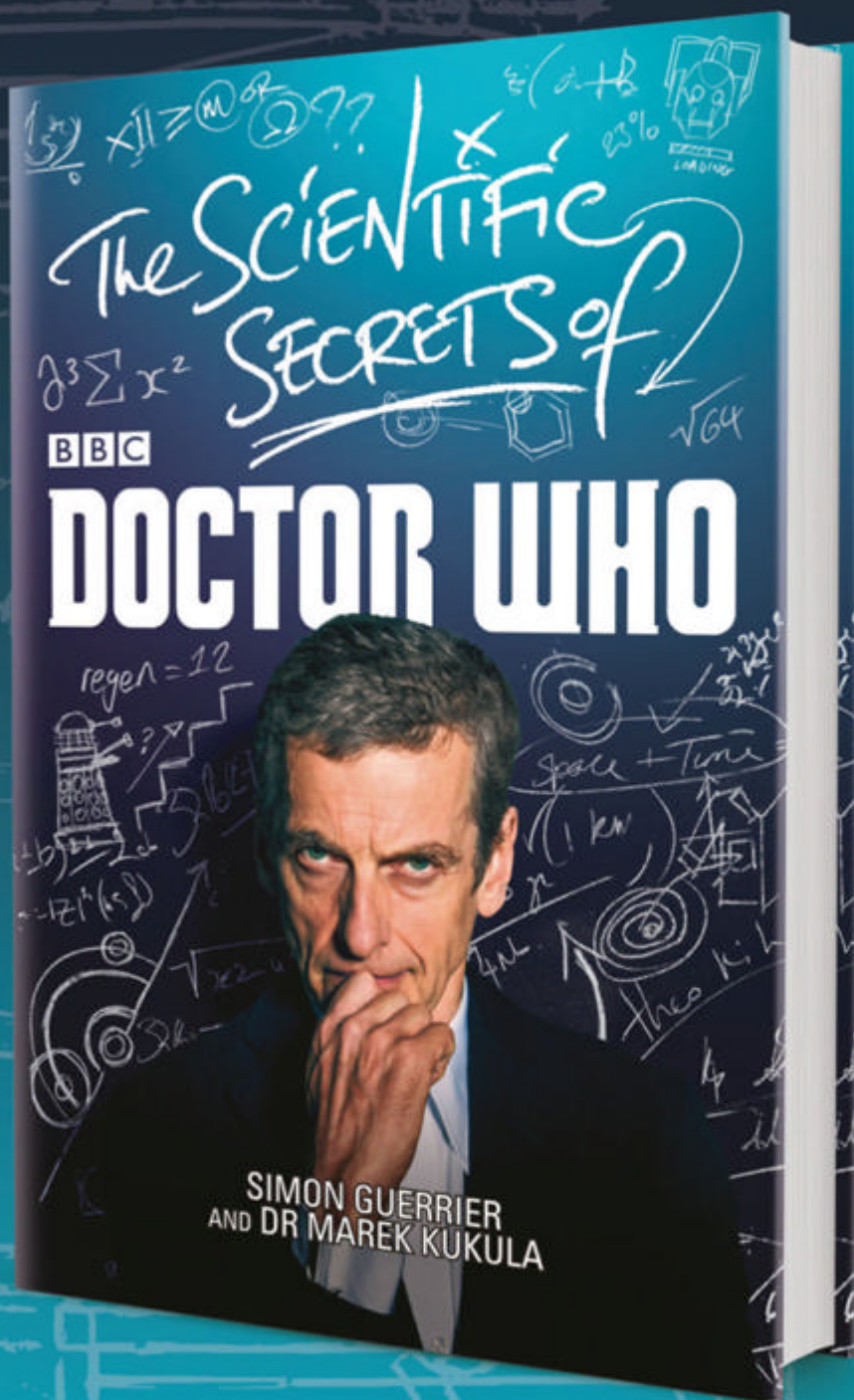
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